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ADVENTURES IN THE ALPS

ARCHIBALD
CAMPBELL
KNOWLES



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ADVENTURES IN THE ALPS



A VIEW OF THE JUNGFRAU

[*Frontispiece*

The Spind

ADVENTURES IN THE ALPS

BY

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL KNOWLES

AUTHOR OF

"JOSCELYN VERNON," "THE HOLY CHRIST-CHILD," "THE TRIUMPH
OF THE CROSS," "THE PRACTICE OF RELIGION," ETC.

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?"

ILLUSTRATED

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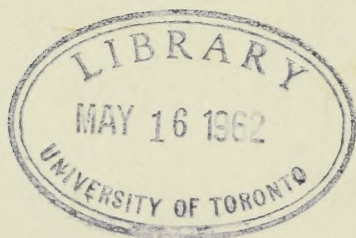
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TO THOSE
TO WHOM THESE SKETCHES
WILL RECALL MANY A HAPPY DAY
IN THE ALPS
IS THIS LITTLE BOOK DEDICATED

PREFACE

THE Author of these sketches confesses to a most absorbing love and admiration of the Alps. The lure of the Mountains has long held him a willing slave. Their charms are many and varied and alike to the adventurous spirit and to the seeker after solitude and silence the attraction of the Alps is one that only increases with knowledge.

In his own way, the Author has visited many of the accessible spots in the High Alps and has fully entered into the atmosphere of grandeur, beauty, romance and adventure which makes this region without a rival. It is but natural to wish that others might share in the pleasures to be enjoyed there and to have a better understanding of many places, more often seen than fully appreciated.

This little work therefore is not a guide-book or a history of climbing or a record of personal experiences, although it may be somewhat of all these, but it aims simply to picture some of those things which make Switzerland so beautiful and fascinating and to enable one to enter into "the treasures of the snow."

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ADVENTURES IN THE ALPS

CHAPTER I

THE LURE OF THE MOUNTAINS

FROM a little visited place, comparatively speaking, Switzerland has become "the playground of the world." No longer, as in mediæval times, do people look upon the mountains as barriers to travel, the dwelling-place of dragons, or the abode of evil spirits, but once more the majesty and mystery of the "everlasting hills" exercise their compelling charm.

Now from all parts of the world come the visitors to this little "garden spot of Europe." Through these giant hills and over them they come, by train, by motor, by carriage, by mule and on foot, the tourists, "trippers" and seekers after pleasure, to land at some one of the trim little towns close to the frontier and then to scatter and wander as the spirit moves them, over a land literally flowing "with milk and honey," and boasting of the most beautiful combination imaginable of shining snow peak, fragrant forest and flowering meadow.

Switzerland in summer is a place of contrasts, both in its scenery and in its visitors. Away up on the

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Alps, one is "far from the madding crowd" amid unparalleled grandeur and beauty, where the "spirit" of the mountains holds sway and the sunshine and the silence soothe the mind and body. In the towns, however, all the nations seem gathered together and "all sorts and conditions of men" jostle one another in the busy little streets. There Babel is repeated in the confusion of tongues, as like waves of the sea, coming and going, in and out, wander the curious crowds.

It is a perfect kaleidoscope of colour, intensely interesting as a study of human nature and most amusing as a revelation of absurd incongruities. Royalty incognito is shouldered by the cheap "tripper"; ladies in the latest creations of Paris, London, Vienna and New York are quite outrivalled by the peasant women off for a holiday dressed in their Sunday finery; the shopkeeper parades side by side with the "haute noblesse," and the soft tongues of the south mingle with the more even notes of the cultivated Americans and English, all of them in marked contrast to the London "cockney," the New York "bowery" and the guttural German which seem to force themselves into notice, while ever in evidence is the "tripper" bound to do each place in the minimum time, seeing he knows not what, and complacently showing this ignorance by pointing out and naming incorrectly all the mountains in sight!

Here too are the "Alpinists," those who come, not to linger in the cities and towns, but to go in among

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the peaks. Like Gaul, the Alpinists may be divided into three parts: "the climbers," "the valley pounders" and "the mountain lovers," although it is possible to be all of these at once! In the towns and villages one meets them arranging for their trips. The guides, bronzed with exposure and hardened by work, plan out the "petits promenades" or "les grands excursions," for "Monsieur le Patron," who may possibly equal the guide in skill and knowledge, or more probably have little experience, or even be a "Tartarin" arrayed in marvellous costume, and like that wonderful character of fiction regarding snow slopes, cornices, crevasses, glaciers, arêtes and all that is associated with climbing as huge jokes!

There are many ways of seeing Switzerland. There is only one right way to see the Alps: on foot. The passes are not the mountains, nor are the towns the Alps. The latter are the soft green meadows which clothe the mountain sides far up towards the eternal snows and give their name to the whole hill region. There the cattle graze, the flowers bloom, and the little villages nestle, while above all smilingly look down the great peaks.

It may be "perfectly delightful to motor about in a comfortable touring car," or "awfully jolly, don't you know, to dangle over a crevasse on the end of a rope," as one overhears at table d'hôte or while "en route," but the true lover of the Alps, who has seen their secrets, knows the former is insufficient and the latter unnecessary.

One may have a very happy time lingering at

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Lucerne, or Geneva, or Interlaken, or some one of those delightful Swiss towns, but such a person should not think that he has seen Switzerland or knows the Alps ! To *see* and to *know*, one must walk and climb, but to do this one need not be a great mountaineer or essay the most ambitious feats. He need only be a lover of the beautiful and possessed of ordinary health and strength. Then on foot, through mountain girdled valley, by brawling stream, through fragrant forest, across blooming meadows, by precipice and ravine, over rocks and glaciers, and amid the snows, there will come the true appreciation of the joy and freedom of the Alpine height. Or sitting perhaps on some wind-swept summit, the *inner* beauty of the *outward* panorama, so far spreading and beautiful, romantic and picturesque, will make itself felt and indelibly stamp its impress on the memory, and make that deep and lasting appeal to the best that is in man,—the soul.

So it was, that Sir Martin Conway could write of his first view of the Bernese Oberland, when he saw the whole stretch of snow, the Shreckhorn, the Wetterhorn, the Mönch, the Eiger, the Jungfrau and the rest : that it was like “ a great white wall, utterly unlike any dream of them that had visited me before, a new revelation, unimaginable, indescribable . . . and from that moment I also entered into life ! ”

Recent years have taught that men do not see the same with the physical eye. Nor is the image before the eye dependant only upon itself. Back of the eye is the brain. The impression upon the mind

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caused by the image before the eye is very largely affected by one's knowledge and tastes. Thus, one person admires the great cliffs and precipices because he loves rocks. Another seeing the same scene is entranced by the sublime beauty of the shining glaciers because he delights in snow peaks. Still another is enraptured with the forests, fields and flowers, which fill in the details of that view, because his eye is for colour. Only a chosen few can take in the entire picture and see the various parts in their relation one with the other and as a collective whole. These differences in taste and temperament play an important part in life and should never be forgotten in one's criticism of people or places.

It is largely due to this that each part of Switzerland seems to have its special devotees. Unfortunately too many, in their praise of that which appeals to them, forget that their verdict is only a personal one after all, and that other places may even rival or excel the localities which they admire. The truly large-minded person and the one who is a real lover of nature will see the charms of all and commend more or less impartially the varied characteristics which distinguish them one from the other. To such "French Switzerland," "German Switzerland" and "Italian Switzerland" are more than mere divisions liked or disliked, according to one's national preferences. They are all interesting in their several ways, the very differences in costume, language, habits and traditions constituting an added charm. The real lover of the mountains does not limit his affections

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to a choice of the Valais, the Oberland, or the Engadine, to the exclusion of all the others, but he can love the beautiful Jungfrau with her attendant train of snow peaks and at the same time admire the majestic Matterhorn with its circle of glistening summits, or Mont Blanc or the Bernina range or other mountain chains, while he will find attractions just as many and varied in the table lands of the Grison cantons as in the more verdant valleys of the Oberland.

If mountains may in a way be personified one might say: "he could be happy with either, were t'other fair charmer away," for no matter where one goes among the Alps, he will find on every side that exquisite loveliness which makes Switzerland so "grandly beautiful" and so "beautifully grand," and makes the Swiss say of it, that "Switzerland is the little gem that GOD made for His Own, when He made the world."

Another great charm of this region is found in the people themselves. In the towns and cities two characteristics are specially noticeable: the general good looks of both men and women and the remarkable softness and sweetness of their voices. French, for instance, if it is good French, when spoken by the Swiss is particularly pretty and English also seems more musical.

The peasants are a strong, hardy and industrious lot. They used to be very picturesque in their cantonal costumes but these are now very seldom seen except south of the Alps or in places like Cham-

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pery, Evolena, and the more remote valleys. There are, to be sure, special occasions when this wealth of finery appears, but generally the peasants now use the commonplace dress of every day.

At one time there was much rivalry in the Bernese Oberland to possess the dress most noted for the richness of its material and its silver ornaments. For all we know this ambition may still obtain but the costumes themselves do not often appear.

In the valleys about Champéry, the women working in the field and on the steep hillsides used to wear trousers. Now, however, so far as costume goes, except on gala days, the visitor must be content to see the red or variegated handkerchiefs which still form the women's head covering and the baggy velveteen trousers which the Savoyard peasant still uses, and now and then the old ornate dress revived for a Sunday.

The life of the dwellers of the High Alps must be very hard in winter. As the visitors see these regions in summer all is fascinating to a degree and one feels that the peasants are fortunate in working for their living, out in the fresh air of the mountains where the quiet, peaceful existence is far better than the rush and bustle of a big city, with perhaps long hours in some grimy machine shop or noisy factory and a home in a dreary tenement.

It is a very different thing in winter from the summer, for then the cold is intense, the snow deep and the life gloomy. There is little work to do except to care for the cattle, so that the men take to wood-

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carving and the women to lace making, as the days drag drearily on.

Of the life in the Chalets the visitor learns little. Few families have a Chalet all to themselves. Generally quite a lot of people are housed in those commodious quarters, where the lower part or cellar is used for the storing of wood or for the cattle, and the upper portion for the living rooms of the families.

In the winter the hours of sunshine are few, the less the lower that one is down, for the high mountains shut off the direct rays of the sun from the valleys save for a few hours at mid-day. Up on the heights, however, if the location is well chosen, the sunshine is longer and stronger, so much so that certain places are now being sought out in winter by throngs of visitors for "winter sports," when the days are spent in the dry air of the Alps, renewing the strength and spirit of those who come from the damp and foggy cities.

In the pages to follow, however, the mountains are only pictured as they are in the spring, the summer and the autumn, as this is the Switzerland which most people see.

The life of the people is a mixture of the old and the new. The peasants on the Alps probably follow the ways and customs which have obtained with them for centuries, but in the towns the Swiss are largely "quite up-to-date" or at least progressing rapidly!

The Swiss do not emigrate to any great extent. They love their mountains too much and cannot long be content to remain away from them. The com-

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munal system largely obtains in the Alpine regions and this draws the people close to each other and to their native land.

Among the most interesting things to an observant traveller are the varying traits and characteristics of the natives of the different parts of Switzerland. These are both racial and national although the many cantons are now united in a confederation. The Ladin and Romansch peoples of the Grisons, the Bernese Oberlanders and the natives of the north, the French Swiss about Lakes Neuchâtel and Geneva, the Valaisan peasantry and the Italians south of the Alps are often most unlike in habits as well as in language and appearance.

They are all attractive in their several ways. Generalities are often too sweeping to be true, so it is hardly fair to make too close comparisons. Yet one statement can hardly be contradicted : that while the peasants of the Valais and Italy and other places are more picturesque and have an atmosphere of romance and sentiment about them, nevertheless for thrift, neatness, cleanliness and hard work the first place must be given to the dwellers in the Bernese Oberland.

In all the favoured region of Switzerland there is opportunity for the artist, inspiration for the poet, exercise for the athlete, adventure for the climber, health for the invalid and rest for the weary. All this and more is to be found among the Alps. The lover of nature and the lover of man alike may see in peoples and in places that which is picturesque,

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interesting and instructive. The "lure of the mountains" makes its appeal in many ways but it is ever there, perceived and felt by all, but in different degree and in varying manner. We see it in the majesty of the hills, in the beauty of the view, in the quaintness of the peasants and in all that goes to make life there so restful and stimulating. Above all is this found in that high Alpine region where the spirit of peace seems enthroned, that upper world of the everlasting snows.



CLIMBING A GLACIER

[To face p 11.]

CHAPTER II

THE STORY OF CLIMBING

IT is an interesting study for those who like to survey the past, to contrast the feeling to-day towards the mountains with the attitude which obtained in ancient and mediæval times. Yet, in a way, it is a tax upon the imagination to picture periods when no smiling hosts waited to welcome the traveller in hôtels full of modern comfort !

In all ages, the Mountains have been a source of wonderment and awe, and very often of inspiration. When the Psalmist sung : “ I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help,” he voiced an almost universal sentiment of the day.

The majesty and mystery about the Mountains appealed to the religious sense. The snow summits shining in the sun seemed to point the spirits of man to that which is above. Consequently it was not strange that there came to be “ holy mountains,” which either from association with some very beautiful character and life, or else from belief in some imaginary divinity came to be regarded as especially sacred. Thus it was with the Mountains of Palestine, the Atlas Mountains in Morocco and Mount Olympus in Greece.

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And not only in Jewish and Classical times was this so, but also in the Christian Era, where now as in the past Shrines, Pilgrimage Chapels, Wayside Calvaries, and various Places of Worship are found on elevated heights, regarded with awe and veneration as "holy mountains."

The Middle Ages however saw a change. It is difficult to trace how it came about. The fact however remains. No longer did "the everlasting hills" exercise an inspiring influence. Superstition peopled them as the abodes of demons and prisoned souls; travellers asserted that they had seen dragons there; merchants regarded them as the barriers of commerce; while the timid, awed by the atmosphere of mystery which seemed to pervade them, even attributed the blinding storm, the howling wind and the crashing avalanche to reigning powers of evil. Even the snow peak, so beautiful and peaceful of a clear day, was looked at with suspicion, as a kind of siren, by its loveliness trying to lure men to destruction!

The early records are amusing in the extreme. There surely was no dearth of dragons in those days, for they figured in almost every tale! For instance it is related that King Peter III, of Aragon, who ventured somewhat into the mountains, saw a dreadful monster issue from a little lake, into which he had innocently thrown a stone. His Majesty consequently had a very great fright. Another record tells of a similar experience of a Monk of Canterbury, while crossing the Great Saint Bernard. He was so much

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terrified that he named the spot "the Place of Torment."

This could hardly be called "Pleasuring in the Alps," although one fancies that nowadays the promise of a few dragons would add much interest to a "prospectus" of a "personally conducted tour" of Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son!

Perhaps however dragons grow more attractive with the perspective of time! It is a pity, however, to have anything so picturesque to be called a "myth," and to have modern writers insist that these mountain dragons of bygone days were nothing more nor less than winding glaciers with their moraines!

Of climbing, as it is done to-day, there was little or nothing. The occasional ascents were looked upon as rather extraordinary achievements and seem to have had no fixed intention to prompt them. Petrarch is said to have taken a trip into the mountains and to have likened his experience to the pilgrimage of the soul, and Leonardo da Vinci is recorded to have reached one of the summits of Monte Rosa. In 1739, a Monk of Engelberg ascended the Titlis, and in 1779 the Prior of the Great Saint Bernard climbed Mont Velan. Charles VII of France is also said to have gone up a peak in Dauphiné, on which expedition it is related that one of the party—a Priest—blessed the mountain, said Mass, named the place after the Holy Trinity and had three little crosses to be erected. All of these, with other records, however, indicate that such trips were looked upon as most exceptional.

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The real climbing of the mountains and the opening up of those regions practically starts with the ascent of Mont Blanc, after many unsuccessful attempts to surmount it. This drew the attention of all eyes to Chamonix and the adjacent country of Switzerland, and climbing came into "vogue," not only as a means of enjoying the wonderful views thus obtained or of having the exercise and excitement of "conquering" a mountain but also of benefiting mankind by many discoveries, geographical, scientific and medical.

As a "sport" climbing became immensely popular and when some of its devotees put into writing their adventures and achievements, the inevitable result followed. For other people came to see the places now becoming noted, and with the increasing facilities for travel, they came in ever-increasing numbers, until climbers, artists and holiday seekers the world over began to regard no year complete without, if possible, a visit to this favoured spot. The Swiss, on their part, responded with a welcome, warm and spontaneous. While it is quite true that the coming of so many strangers meant a rich harvest to the country, it is also true that the Swiss made the spirit of hospitality completely overshadow the spirit of commercialism. If the coming of the visitors was a perfect blessing to the country, offering employment to many and adding to the wealth of the people, it is not too much to say that on the other hand, comforts and even luxuries were gladly and generously provided for those who came, cities, towns, villages, valleys

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and mountain resorts becoming transformed, almost as if by magic, until to-day there is no country in the world where under similar conditions can be found as good hôtels, as excellent fare, as attentive service, as well-kept towns and attractive shops and all of those little incidentals that make for the pleasures of modern life as are to be found in Switzerland, where everyone seems to wish well to the newcomer and make him thoroughly enjoy his sojourn in "the playground of Europe." And this even has its amusing side when we read of the most primitive "out of the way places" trying to rival their neighbours, in their bid for popularity, by advertising in a most marvellous juxtaposition of words: "Afternoon Tea, Tennis, Golf, Billiards, American Bar and all the Comforts of Home" !

If one feels any interest in climbing properly speaking, he would find it rather provocative of mirth to contrast this occupation, pastime, or sport (or whatever he wishes to call it) as practised to-day with what it was in its beginning.

At first, with peaks untrodden, mountaineering a novelty and glacial action unknown, there was naturally little knowledge as to *how*, *when* and *where to climb*. Such things as ladders, ropes, nailed boots, ice-axes and the many little things now looked upon as necessities were never thought of.

One fancies that some of the "get ups" to-day would have caused consternation in the olden times !

The only recommendation of a guide seems to have been that he was a man of good habits and possessed

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of strength and "surefootedness"—in fact a simple peasant of the hills.

Pictures and photographs always form good records. There is one of De Saussure and his party ascending Mont Blanc. They wore *high silk hats* and *long tailed coats* !

Now climbing is changed. It has developed into a veritable "snow craft," and the practice of it has become a profession. There is still a large element of chance, of danger and even of death, but with proper guides, wise precautions and fair weather, one who is physically "fit" may fear little. With rare exceptions, when serious accidents happen, they are generally due to the folly of the climbers, who sometimes persist in going contrary to the advice of the guides or who attempt alone feats which should never be so undertaken.

Climbing, however, is no longer limited to the few, except in the case of the more ambitious expeditions.

For now, ordinary walkers, with care, may take many trips and tours, where guides are no longer necessary, so well marked has been made the way and so freed from serious difficulty. This is largely due to the guides themselves, who in the spring of each year, again open up the tracks for the various walks and climbs which each mountain resort now notes among its attractions for the coming visitor.

To-day, the pleasures of the mountains are open to all who come. There is room for everybody, there is enjoyment for all, and the old as well as the young, the invalid as well as the strong, can see as never before

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the glories and beauties of the mountains and enter into the happy life of the heights. Unless the climber is oblivious to all else but the feat accomplished, he will rejoice that others may now see, even in a more limited way, that which once was for him alone, and he will enjoy the thought that those rare views and experiences which he so deeply loves are now appreciated by others. And it may be that the less ambitious have more enjoyment than the more adventurous, if the old adage be true that "pleasure ceases where fatigue begins," for after all, next to the far-spreading view itself or perhaps even before that, comes the enjoyment from the thoughts and reflections of a more spiritual nature which the scenery suggests, where those possessed of the higher faculties and perceptions, who have "ears to hear" and "eyes to see," apprehend a message from the mountains, missed by others!

Words hardly picture the varied pleasures of the High Alps. Many who never ascend snow summits or go far from the beaten track may still find innumerable paths which afford magnificent views of the mountains and offer one all the privileges of the Alpine Paradise. Who can fitly picture the intense pleasure of those walks far from the haunts of man, seeing the most splendid scenery, breathing the purest air and drinking in the loveliness on every side! Who can fully describe the joy of those tramps through the forests of pine, seeing the play of light and shadow and walking over the soft green moss or the crisp pine needles! Who can rightly describe the pleasure in wandering through flowering meadows, stopping now

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and then to pick a handful of the pretty Alpine blossoms ! Who can fitly tell of the delight of walking by running waters, with the song of the melting snows and the sparkling streams falling like music on the ear ; or the excitement of threading one's way among séracs and crevasses, amid those frozen rivers of ice, cutting steps here and there for better progress or security ; or the joy of stepping along the brink of ravines through which the roaring torrents rush ; or the coming to the summit over spotless stretches of snow shining like jewels in the sun !

On those heights come new and strange and uplifting thoughts as one looks down on the world below, the valleys in shadow, the heights in sunlight. Above are the sparkling snows. Around are the embattled rocks. All is solitude. All is silence. It needs not the artist's eye, or the poet's soul to feel the inspiration of such a scene, for everyone with but a spark of the spiritual must be conscious of the influence of such beautiful and sublime surroundings, and in the thought of the nearness to nature have suggested the thought of the nearness to God. As Byron wrote, each one can say, "I live not in myself but I become portion of that around me : and to me high mountains are a feeling," and with him say those words from "Childe Harold"—

"I love not man the less, but nature more,
From these our interviews in which I steal,
From all I may be or have been before,
To mingle with the universe and feel
What I can ne'er express yet cannot all conceal."

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There is too a comradeship and a chivalry not only among climbers but also among all lovers of the mountains. To those who have never been to the High Alps or have never gazed from some exalted height upon the world below, there must ever be a failure to understand the feelings that then possess one and that bind together those of kindred tastes and similar experiences.

The walker or the climber is on the most intimate terms with the guide. They may be "master" and "man," "patron" and "guide" but they are also friends. They do not stand upon ceremony. They do not act apart. The rope which often fastens them is no stronger than the tie of friendship. And different as may be their birth, their training, their temperament, their knowledge, the environment of the mountains gives them a common feeling of sympathy and understanding.

It does not surprise the guide to see his "gentleman" gaze entranced and silent at a splendid panorama nor does it seem strange to the "patron" to behold some enthusiastic porter kiss the very rock of some lofty summit. The same love of the mountains holds them both and they have the most enduring bond in their mutual love of the work of God's hand.

Frequently they "bunk" close to one another, eat and drink together and above all retail to one another the stock of stories possessed by each. Yet this comradeship does not mean lack of respect. The climber or walker is never more highly regarded than when these relations exist.

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It has been largely due to this mutual love and trust between patron and guide that climbing in other countries has been largely conducted by the Swiss. Of course, other considerations also conducted to this end, as the knowledge that the natives of the Andes or Himalayas, the Rockies or Sierras were ignorant of scientific climbing and also that those making ascents were rarely from those parts.

Climbing in the Alps, however, will probably always be more popular than elsewhere, for while the Andes, the Himalayas and the mountains of North America may be of wider expanse and higher and grander than the Alps, they are either impossible of very near approach except after the most arduous effort, or lack that marvellous combination of colour which render the Alps so picturesque and distinctive and above all have none of the romance and association which have made Switzerland famous. This last difference can never be overcome and the more one knows of the story of the Alps, the more this difference is felt. Here one thrills with the thought of those who first surmounted those great snow summits! There one stands spellbound, recalling some exciting tale of adventure or some sad record of death and destruction! Again one looks at scenes noted in history as where Hannibal crossed the Alps, or Napoleon led his armies, or William Tell shot the apple from his son's head, or those Swiss and Tyrolean patriots led their followers to throw off the tyrant's rule. It is the association with the personal element that lends an added charm to the Alps and renders

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that region where forests, flowers, meadows, streams, rocks and snow fields make a perfect paradise, doubly dear on account of the romance or the history connected with them.

Among the successful climbers two kinds of people have been especially prominent : the Clergy and the fair sex. From the days when the old Monks were the most valiant in respect to the mountains, down to the living present, the "man of GOD" has been one of the most enthusiastic devotees of climbing and walking. It is no unusual thing to see the Roman Clergy "doing a trip" with Cassock tucked up and Soutane over the arm. As for the English Clergy, their name is legion in the climbing annals. Everywhere they flock to the mountains and often they have been associated with the most successful ascents, the most hazardous attempts and sometimes with the most awful tragedies.

Of ladies there have been not a few. It is said that the Empress Josephine made an ascent with sixty-eight guides ! If the number of the guides had been less one might have more belief in Madame's climbing powers !

Perhaps the first great climb of a woman was that made by a peasant girl of Chamonix who went up Mont Blanc in 1808, her object being not a love of the sport but to gain notoriety and the consequent monetary profit. Since then many of her sex have engaged in climbing and walking tours, some of them being among the noted "lights." People may sometimes criticize the disregard of the conventional

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which must come in to women's climbing but they cannot but admire their skill, bravery and spirit of adventure. Many persons, however, cannot but think that it is at least questionable if a woman should do these things to any great extent, as the necessary exertion is often far beyond their physical power and in the years to come they generally pay most dearly for doing that which, while it appealed to their love of sport, was really unsuited to their sex.

Many of the guides are deeply religious, especially those who are Roman Catholics. They do that which, sad to say some people do not do: they carry their belief into their life and consequently have a very beautiful faith and trust. Mr. Whymper mentions an instance of this when he and others were making a very hazardous trip on which Christian Almer was one of the guides. At one time the chances looked against their descending alive but Almer had no doubt of the result for, said he "the good GOD has brought us up and He will take us down safely."

It is rarely that an irreligious man can appreciate the Alps! The atheist and agnostic find in the mountains arguments from nature which rudely shatter their pet theories. Almost unconsciously the unbeliever finds in himself an antagonism to the "everlasting hills." The very things which appeal to the religious anger or reprove the irreligious. The power latent in the mountains speaks of One, to Whom all must some day give account.

Climbers speak of "conquering" mountains. It

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may be flattering to one's pride to fancy this but it is not true. After all is said, the mountain is stronger than man. It would seem at times as if these sleeping giants were sublimely indifferent to what man was doing. Often the climber surmounts all difficulties, and even when nature is helped by the storm, wins in his war with the elements and gains the point for which he is aiming. Yet it is only, as it were, by permission, for frequently not only in the way itself, but also in the sudden storm coming out of the clear sky, the driving snow and the blinding flash, as well as the death dealing avalanche claim their victims, their toll of the Alpine road.

The record of catastrophes and accidents is a long one. Strange to say lovers of the mountains read these stories with breathless interest. They do not deter from climbing, but fascinate. They allure one and appeal to the spirit of adventure and persons otherwise timid find themselves full of enthusiasm at these thrilling tales of daring. A few of these records may be chosen from the many to illustrate some phases of climbing.

One of the most graphic of these stories shows the devotion of the guides to their patron, it being an unwritten law that as a matter of honour the guide must watch over and care for those who employ him, even to the sacrifice of self. "All return or none return," was the old tradition, even if not always actually lived up to. In this instance, an Englishman and two guides were caught in a terrific storm on one of the Aiguilles above Chamonix. They

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could not see for the blinding snow and were forced to stand just where they had been overtaken, on a little narrow ledge of rock jutting out from a wall of ice about which were sheer precipices. Here, roped together, the hours passed. The traveller was almost dead with cold and was only kept from freezing in the driving snow by one of the guides, who with his own back frozen against the ice behind him held the Englishman to his breast, bared for the purpose, that the warmth of his own body might save the other's life. It is hard to equal this story of self-sacrifice and heroism.

Perhaps the most pathetic record and one not without a moral, is the tragedy of the death of Mr. Bean and ten companions on Mont Blanc. The three gentlemen of the party were novices at climbing, having had no experience in real mountaineering.

They started with good guides but in doubtful weather. Those in the valley from time to time watched their progress, using the large telescope. When last seen they were not very far below the summit but apparently lying close to the ground, as if trying to avoid being blown away by a storm of wind which was seen to be raging there.

They were not seen again and when after due time they failed to return, great anxiety was felt, but although search parties went out, they could not succeed in getting very far on account of the heavily falling snow. It was not for ten days that it was really possible to make a successful start and after such a long wait little hope was felt of finding the

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climbers alive. A large party went on the rescue trip, and on the day following found the bodies of one of the gentlemen, a Mr. McCorkindale, and two porters, and at a little distance off, somewhat above, the bodies of Mr. Bean and another porter. The other members of the party were never discovered.

Mr. Bean had noted in his diary the dreadful experience of those days, that on the date on which he probably died being particularly sad : " We have been on Mont Blanc for two days in a terrible snow-storm : we have lost our way and are in a hole scooped out of the snow, at a height of 15,000 feet. I have no hope of descending. Perhaps this book may be found and forwarded. We have no food. My feet are already frozen and I am exhausted. I have only strength to write a few words. I die in the Faith of Jesus Christ. With affectionate thoughts of my family. My remembrances to all. I trust we may meet in Heaven."

Such a death is dramatic to a degree. One can hardly realize the horror of that long spun out agony, as strength and life slowly ebbed away amid the snows and the storm, the cold and the desolation of that mountain height.

In this dreadful experience there was time—perhaps too much time—for preparation for death. In many other of the Alpine tragedies the end came at once.

All know of Mr. Whymper's first successful climb of the Matterhorn and of the awful sequel, when in descending all the party but himself and two guides,

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the Taugwalders, fell four thousand feet to instantaneous death on the glacier below. No one, when at Zermatt, even for a long time, forgets this catastrophe, of which the frowning face of Mont Cervin is a continual reminder and of which the recollection lingers in the guide-book's pages, in the Musée's collection and in the quiet graves in the churchyard.

Yet awful as was this accident, it pales in comparison with a still more dreadful drama on the Dent Blanche in 1899. In this climb, the party had started to ascend by the western arête, very rarely attempted. There are many accounts of this expedition, from which it appears that after very difficult and arduous work, they had reached a place about an hour below the summit, where on this day the rocks were covered with a thin film of ice. In a most difficult, almost impossible spot, one of the guides, who had been trying to pull himself up over the top of a buttress, which he had attempted to reach by standing on an ice-axe held by two others of the party, suddenly fell backward, slowly but surely dragging the others over the precipice to the abyss below—all but one who was probably saved by his guide, who as he fell, roughly fastened the rope over a point of rock. How the survivor stood the shock of seeing all of his companions carried away in a moment of time, without a cry, to a dreadful death, how he alone managed not only to climb to the summit, but also to get down safely to Zermatt, after passing two nights, in darkness, storm, mist and cold, losing and finding again his ice-axe, being blinded on the last

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day by the glare, going into a sort of trance part of the time and being in a deep sleep for many hours is a story which has perhaps no equal in Alpine adventure. Even those who see no sense or virtue in making high mountain ascents must admit that danger there calls out the most heroic traits of character.

Such catastrophes show the sober side of climbing. To those who understand there is always a solemnity about the more ambitious attempts, notwithstanding the happy, careless days which have passed or the smiling serenity of the snow peaks. For beautiful and peaceful as the mountains are, they stand full of silent, latent power, terrible in its consequences, when exercised. It is as if the spirit of the Alps said to those who essayed to too intimate an acquaintance, "thus far and no further," disobedience being quickly followed with punishment. The climber never knows when a sérac may totter, or a shower of stones fall or a cornice crumble away, or an avalanche come crashing down. If Nature is sublime and lovely, it is also terrible and merciless. Call it inanimate matter if you will, but at times one could easily fancy that Nature was endowed with a personal existence, and that when its patience becomes exhausted, it rewards man's presumption by the penalty of death.

The faithfulness of the Alpine guide is proverbial. His knowledge and skill are often wonderful. Woodcraft and mountain craft have this in common: success depends upon the combination of intuition, observation and experience.

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An American Indian, born to a knowledge of the woods, can apparently find his way without difficulty, through a trackless forest, noting every little thing as the bark of the trees, the shadow cast by the sun, the marks on the leaves, and perhaps the almost effaced "blaze" of a former trail, long since forgotten. So an Alpine guide is familiar with the mountains. He will notice the formation, he will observe the characteristics which make each peak individual, he will see signs in the snow and in the sky, unnoticed by others, and he will often be able to lead over rocks and glaciers by a sure and safe way, although he may visit these particular scenes for the first time. It is really, as it were, a kind of intuition and instinct and it is not strange to hear it related of a certain very famous guide who visited London, that although he had arrived there in a fog, a few days later he went over the same way to a friend's house, without direction and only stopping once or twice to consider and to examine the signs!

It is such a man—a good guide—who adds safety to a climb, but even with this, another most important element must enter in, if people would reduce to a minimum the chances of accident—and this is the mutual trust and confidence which should bind all together, with good leading on the one hand and faithful following on the other. The ropes which fasten the climbers together are not more important than the attitude of "patron" and guide, for not only must there be the true spirit of comradeship, sharing alike the dangers and the pleasures, but there

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must be faith in the ability of the guide and obedience to his directions.

There is a tragic story illustrating the importance of this. A party had started to ascend one of the great peaks, led by a competent guide. One of the climbers, however, was of a very stubborn and independent nature, assured of his own ability and always fretting under any kind of direction and especially when he deemed the precautions unnecessary. He was particularly annoyed at the constant use of the rope. When they reached a rather level place, he persuaded the guide, much against his will, to detach him from the rope. He had hardly been freed, when, in a place, apparently perfectly safe, he trod on a loose slab of stone and inadvertently started a slide of snow, which almost in a moment, before anyone could catch or stop him, hurled him to his death! If he had still been on the rope, he would have been saved. It is not hard to find a moral lesson here, a little allegory of life, where if one once casts off the rope of self-discipline and self-restraint, one slip into grievous sin will start the soul to destruction.

This is the sober side of climbing. There is a brighter side, for Alpine experience is not by any means confined to catastrophes. In fact, there have probably been as many lives lost in the mountains by picking flowers too near the edge of a precipice as in the most hazardous expeditions.

The accidents are far outnumbered by the many happy and successful trips of every kind. Some of

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these are even most amusing as is the following account of an ascent of the Breithorn above Zermatt. The would-be climber was a Britisher, "a citizen of no mean city," being a resident of London, and if his adventurous spirit was in due proportion to his body, he could certainly have boasted no small measure of bravery! The journey started from the Riffel Alp and in due time—how long need not be stated—crossed the rocks and the glaciers to the hut in which they were to sleep for the night. It is an open question whether one *really sleeps* on these trips, for in many Alpine huts, the box bed in which one rests holds that which "murders sleep," or as some one once paraphrased Scripture: "the creeping thing that creepeth in the night." And, if one does succeed in falling asleep, it seems but a moment ere he is awakened from his slumbers by the guide gently shaking him by the shoulder as he says: "It is time to be moving, Monsieur."

Then a hurried toilet (and one hopes at least hurried prayers), a cup of coffee and in a few moments, out of the cabin to be roped. On this occasion, the moon was still up, the stars seemed very bright and the air was chill and cold. The novice shivered. Cold is such a good excuse! For to novices there is something solemn and startling in the spectral whiteness of such a scene and the almost supernatural stillness, on those vast stretches before the sunrise. When they started, the steps crunching in the frozen snow, it was as a journey into the unknown.

Presently the ice slope was reached and cutting

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steps began. Slowly and surely they worked their way up, but the higher the body of this climber thus ascended, the lower his spirits descended ! The wind began to whistle around. It was freezingly cold. The climber looked down. The descent below seemed fathomless ! Many thoughts rushed through his troubled mind : Where was the fun of being frozen ! What was the sense of shivering on a steep ice slope ! “Home, sweet home ” was not such a bad place after all ! Surely it was better to read of all this sort of thing, get “points ” and then talk knowingly, without experience ! “Allons, Monsieur,” broke in the guide, “*toujours ascende.*” “O ! that awful thing,” thought the climber, “‘*toujours ascende*’ !” Then, there came a severe pull : the ascent was ended ; the guide had fairly hauled the climber up the last ten feet and he stood or sat huddled on the snowy ridge. “Voilà, Monsieur, Monte Rosa, Monte Rosa !” enthusiastically pointed out the guide. “I don’t care for Monte Rosa, or any other blooming peak ! I’m done ! Besides, I’ll fall off !” “Monsieur ! Monsieur ! Mont Blanc, regardez : voilà ; Mont Cervin ! Voilà, Monsieur—” persevered the guide. “Stop it, guide, I don’t care a rap. I’m frozen, I tell you and done up. —— your blooming mountains !” The guide stopped, smiled and waited. He bided his time. He had seen this kind of a climber before. The early hour, the piercing cold and not really the white feather was accountable. The sun begins to rise. The climber’s self-assurance returned. The sun warms his half-frozen body and

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with the light and the heat his nervousness left him.

After all, it was worth while ! He looked at the mountains now and saw that glorious panorama, here and there aglow in the rosy dawn of the rising sun ! It well compensated for all the time and the trouble, the fatigue and the cold ! The lure of the mountains had seized him and henceforth he is their worshipper and advocate, to return to smoky London with many a memory of that glorious sunrise on the snowy Breithorn !

This story but illustrates the education of a climber or walker. If he is young he is probably seized with an ever-increasing desire to make "ascents." He sees the mountains in his dreams and he fancies his conquests of them. He looks in admiring wonder upon the real climbers and takes in without one thought of qualification or reservation the tales they tell of the deeds done, of the peaks surmounted. It is well, however, for a little caution to be exercised, for as "all that glitters is not gold" so "all that happens is not told," and many a story to be a good story has to leave unmentioned many matters which would spoil its charm. With climbing as with most things in life, it is wise to consult the head as well as the heart and not to allow the love of adventure and the lure of the mountains to run away with wisdom and common sense, for where one succeeds many fail and real climbing is only for those who are fitted by nature for the work and are endowed with the necessary strength and skill.

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When first used the rope and the ice-axe are most delightful ! It is the initiation, as it were, into some of the secrets of climbing, although as a matter of fact, many of those thus introduced to the "instruments" of the craft never learn much more ! The romance of the rope begins to go after a little while and the sentiment about the ice-axe does not linger long, when the rope grows wearisome and many steps have to be cut in a cold wind on a steep snow slope.

Life, however, is largely playing at something and mountaineering is only one of the ways ! Given short easy trips without danger or hardship or that fatigue which ends pleasure and the rope and the axe are most welcome, adding "character" and "atmosphere" to the part of the climber !

Even novices acquit themselves well and if they really love the life they will soon learn many things from both observation and experience. They will, in a short time, acquire considerable skill and even become quite adepts at cutting steps and standing or walking steadily in steep and dizzy places, attaining that which some persons laughingly speak of as "the art of holding on."

One of the early climbers, M. Ramond de Carbonnière, humourously referred to the difficulties of mountaineering : one day while he and a friend were proceeding along a slippery arête, advancing only thirteen steps in twenty minutes, he saw a fly moving freely about over his head. It was too much for his philosophy, especially as he had just lost his spectacles down a crevasse, and he comments upon

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the "disproportion between mental faculties and physical powers ! . . . a feeble insect plays about here where I have to hold on !" When on an ice-slope or on steep rocks, after a sleety rain, the climber will realize the truth underlying this witticism, for then is man most helpless in the face of nature, when it requires all of his boasted skill to overcome the difficulty of the way.



MONT BLANC AND CHAMONIX

CHAPTER III

A CLIMB ABOVE THE CLOUDS AT CHAMONIX

THERE are four great centres for excursions into the High Alps : Chamonix, Zermatt, Pontresina and the Bernese Oberland. All of these have their special attractions, but in some ways it is best to see Chamonix first, for although in Savoy and not in Switzerland, it is one of the finest of all Alpine resorts, and having been the spot where climbing really began, it establishes, as it were, a standard.

Chamonix has a charm all its own. It is almost indefinable but it is there, and there are not lacking persons of artistic discernment who prefer it to Switzerland. It is probably inferior in the variety of its scenery, but in the magnificence of its snow summits, the grandeur of its glaciers and the picturesque-ness of its surroundings, it is unsurpassed.

When the little bell in the Parish Church sounds the Angelus, when the shadows have chased the sun from the valleys, when the Alpine glow bathes the vast stretches of Mont Blanc in its soft, weird, mysterious glow, making rocks and snows grow ruddy and pink and the very atmosphere to diffuse colour, then

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the wonderful loveliness of it all impresses the beholder as few other places do.

There was a time when Chamonix was a simple, quiet little village, where the good monks taught the contented peasants to love and serve God. Now, such are the numbers coming from outside to see the great "white mountain," that the primitive village has become a progressive town, with good hôtels, pretty shops, open air cafés, and even boasting of Music, Casino and Moving Pictures of "ascents." Yet for all the march of modern ways, for all the trains and the motors, the place is still quiet and peaceful, and away from the busy little station and the main thoroughfare, seems to reflect the repose and calm of the mountains which smile upon it.

Mont Blanc is the magnet which attracts people to Chamonix. It was this monarch of European mountains which made the little village what it is. Nevertheless it is a mistake to look upon Chamonix as a newly discovered place, simply because it was almost unknown to travellers. For long before its mountains were climbed, the valley was a little religious centre, in 1090 having become the property of the Benedictine Monks. It was this cession which gave its present name, for the document recording it named the country in Latin "Campus munitus," which in French became "Champ muni" and in English was changed into "Chamouney" or "Chamonix."

For years, however, the popular name was "Prieuré" or Priory, from the Monastery built

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there, and here frequently came the Bishops of Geneva, among the prelates entertained having been Saint Francis de Sales.

The religious atmosphere still prevails, at least so far as the peasants are concerned, and it is said that not only is the Parish Church crowded at Mass, but that also the people in their life are most faithful to their religious duties and are exemplary for their family, social and political standards.

In the olden days, two objects drew the adventurous among the peasants into the mountains : the search for crystals and the pursuit of chamois. The real promoter of climbing was the noted physician and scientist De Saussure. Before the Hôtel Royal stands a wonderfully artistic and realistic statue of De Saussure and Jacques Balmat, the guide, the latter represented as enthusiastically pointing out Mont Blanc, the former pictured as standing in awe and admiration before the great shining expanse of snow peaks which cuts across the blue skies so far above the valley.

De Saussure was not at first successful. It was by Balmat, not by him that the mountain was first scaled, but De Saussure's desire to do this feat had given the incentive to Balmat and his friend Dr. Paccard, the village physician, which led to its accomplishment. Later on, in 1787, De Saussure himself reached the summit, accompanied by Balmat and seventeen other guides, who carried up his scientific instruments.

Since then, Chamonix has become world famed

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and no trip to the Alps seems quite complete without a visit to this quiet pastoral valley and the sight of the great "white mountain."

The catastrophes on Mont Blanc make a long list, probably far exceeding that of any other Alpine place. It is not because the mountain is so difficult, for there are many others far harder to climb, but it is that the time required for the ascent and the consequent chance of sudden storms make it very dangerous. It may sound very well, in a drawing-room, before a group of admiring friends, to dub Mont Blanc as "simply an awful grind," but skilled climbers know that there are few ascents which require more strength and perseverance or more care and skill.

When the little cloud hovers over the summit, then Mont Blanc is said "to be smoking his pipe," a sure warning of a coming change in the weather.

The first part of the route is easy and is often traversed by the ordinary walker as far as the Pierre Pointue or a little beyond, while the last part is over seemingly endless stretches of snow fields and snow slopes. The difficult part is the middle ascent, before and after leaving the Grands Mulets, where the climber is treated to almost every variety of mountaineering, and passes through a scene of surpassing splendour: séracs, crevasses, snow bridges and all that make a snow paradise for the adventurous.

Life at Chamonix, however, is not confined to the real climber. There are those who have never trod the virgin snows of Mont Blanc, or who have never

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stood upon the Grêpon, or looked down on the other side from the "sky line" but who nevertheless have enjoyed many a long tramp and many a splendid view, without glory perhaps but also without danger, and who probably know far more about the surrounding mountains than those who confine themselves to the heights.

The climbers are generally off early in the morning, with their guides. The people one generally sees are the tourists and the trippers. One might change the lines of the "Ancient Mariner" to read—

"Trippers, tourists everywhere
But not a climber seen."

On a clear day, Chamonix is an animated place, especially in the morning and the evening, when the energetic ones are starting for and returning from their trips. Here is a party on mules, bound for the Montanvert, where they will walk over the Mer de Glace and scramble down the Mauvais Pas and wonder if they *could* do Mont Blanc! Another little group is ready for the Glacier des Bossons, there to see the waterfall and the ice séracs and be photographed crossing the glacier by the suave individual who stations himself there for that purpose, to send home to their dazed friends and relatives pictures showing them surrounded by a sea of ice, with yawning crevasses near and huge séracs above—as if there was the slightest danger where they crossed! And the rest of the crowd are bound here, there and everywhere, to climb the view points of the Brévent, La

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Flégère and the Plan l'Aiguille, to wander through the woods and fields of the valley, or to motor towards Geneva or the Rhône.

Then at night, back come the crowds, tired and dusty and hungry, but full of delightful experiences, to don their evening dress and talk over the pleasures of the day gone by or the day to come, or to seek the excitement of the Casino or the Picture Shows, or to join the interesting throng of guides, climbers, tourists and peasants which collects below the Church and the street corners near by, a typically democratic crowd, with evidently no thought of the strangeness in the mixture of dress-suit and climbing costume, décolleté and peasant dress !

Not everyone however has enjoyed a climb *above the clouds*. It cannot be the experience of all, for the possibility of such at Chamonix is only in the autumn, when the trees change to their rich tints of red and gold and there come peculiar atmospheric conditions. On these rare days, the morning will dawn with the valleys filled with a purplish mist, to turn to dense fog in the lower levels, as the afternoon approaches. The strange phenomenon about this "mer de brouillards" or "sea of fogs" is that it only extends a short distance up, like a broad coverlet spread over the valley below, while above, there will be a cloudless sky and a shining sun, showing the snow summits rising in all their beauty and grandeur.

Some years ago, this "mer de brouillards" came very nearly making an unhappy ending to a day spent

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out on the mountains. Some persons out walking had started to climb the steep ascent of the Planpraz, intending to cross from there by the little narrow path that led along the precipitous slope to La Flégère, several miles away.

The walk to the Planpraz was a lovely one. It is a road for most of the way and although it ascends abruptly, it is not at all hard or difficult. For part of the journey the path winds through the forests of pines and larches, which grow well up on the mountain slopes, at almost every turn giving charming and changing views of the great range of peaks opposite across the valley, here framed as in a picture by the bordering trees. Moss covered boulders, long feathery ferns, and fragrant pine needles mark the way, and every now and then little squirrels run noiselessly in and out, looking at the intruders and then off again as if disapproving of their coming.

Steadily this pretty romantic path keeps ascending, presently coming out upon the first formal resting-place, the "Châlet Restaurant Planpraz," where the inner man always finds opportunity (and very generally seizes it) for refreshment. The terrace overlooks the valley and from below can be heard the sweetest of all sounds in the Alps, that of bells, the mellowed and muffled Church-bell, perhaps sounding the Angelus and the soft notes of the cow-bells, all mingling their notes together in a sweet chiming cadence, restful and musical.

Very unfortunately this party did not notice that the

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mist, which they had seen further down the valley, had crept in and had now closed off above them any view of the sky. Forgetting about the occasional visitation of the "sea of clouds," their first thought was that the mists heralded a storm, but the desire to reach the point for which they had started prevented them turning back and returning to Chamonix. Walking or climbing in mists is far from pleasant or exhilarating and the spirits were well dampened and the bodies were beginning to feel the chill, when almost without warning, they came out into the clear air for a moment, to see Mont Blanc in almost startling prominence standing out from a frame of fog. In another instant the mists had again closed in as heavily as before.

Breathing becomes hard in such an atmosphere, and they had almost decided to stop and go back, when suddenly, stepping out of the dense fog they found themselves above the clouds, in the glorious sunshine, with the bluest of blue skies overhead !

To those who have never before had such an experience, the enjoyment is keen and the surprise is great. The valleys are completely shrouded. There might never exist a village, a Church or a house, for the whole scene below is blotted out. Beneath is seen a sea of clouds, greyish black and rough, like the restless waves of the ocean, stretching for miles, from one side of the valley to the other, without a break or a rift, lapping the rocks of Mont Blanc like the swell of the ocean. It is a

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strange reflection to remember that underneath are valleys and villages, with human and animal life, engaged in pleasure or work !

Above this sea of clouds the stupendous snow mantle of Mont Blanc seems to shine in the sunlight as never before, while vying in grandeur with it are the rock summits of the Aiguille du Dru, and the Aiguille Verte, soaring up from the clouds like embattled, turreted castles. The whole is as another world. It is only at such a time that climbers and walkers ever see the summits severed from their base, then hidden with the valley. It is as unique as it is impressive and it serves to show the height of the peaks, which seem even higher than when the whole is revealed.

Looking at a scene like this suggests a little allegory of life. For as a walk will start in the sunshine, and then enter into the clouds and come out into a new glory beyond, so life beginning with all that is bright soon experiences the shadows and mists of disappointment and discouragement, of trial and temptation, but if one only keeps on climbing, perseveringly and trustingly, the clouds but develop character and test one's faith, love and devotion and in the end, one comes out once more into the glory and the sunlight, victory and triumph. As in this walk, when the clouds ended, there was seen the sun still shining, so in life, when the trial is past, there is found God's Face smiling upon us ! And it is well to remember amid the changes and chances of life, that old song, "Wait 'til the clouds pass by," for

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GOD ever reigns, even as the sun ever shines, although for the time hidden from our sight.

As these climbers then sat on the Planpraz and drank in the glory and beauty of that wonder-world above the fogs, they may well have mused and moralized in this way. They lingered long, too long, as it turned out, for it was late in the afternoon, when the shadows were creeping over the scene, that they started along the uneven and uncertain path skirting the mountain side on the way to La Flégère.

The path was by no means dangerous, although the slopes fell precipitously on one side, but strange to say, it had never occurred to any of the three that the very fog they had watched from above would have to be passed through on the descent. If they had realized this, they would have returned by the plainly marked road up which they had come, instead of by a narrow little track or trail, up and down towards La Flégère.

Their mistake came upon them the moment they again entered the clouds. Immediately they lost the way, and the more they looked for it, the more bewildered they became, and to add to their perplexity, the autumn day was drawing to a close. A good guide, of course, would not have cared very much, but none of the three was a guide. It was only by stooping close to the ground that the marks of the track could be found and many times a wrong turn was made, ending at the edge of the precipice. These ways had been made by huge stones rolling down and over, and

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it was not a very comfortable feeling to realize how few wrong steps would send one to sure death !

Each moment saw them hurrying more and more, in a growing darkness and a thickening fog. They passed a cowshed but it told them nothing. It became quite dark. The path was lost entirely. One of the party, stumbled and fell with a thud. At first they thought that he was hurt and visions of a night on the mountains, in the cold and chill, made them shiver, as people had died of such exposure. It was not a pleasant thought and it was with great relief that they found that they could still go on.

Just when they realized that they were entirely lost and that stumbling along as they were, was really placing them in a very dangerous position, they came to a little hollow, below which were the trees, where there was a signpost standing out of the darkness indicating the junction of three little trails. One led to La Flégère, one to the valley and one in the direction from which they had come. There was, of course, only one thing now to do, and that was to take the road to the valley. Getting the right direction, after many blind collisions with trees, they emerged from the clouds, under them, and found that although it was quite dark they could now find the broad path which led through that part of the woods. Presently they saw the lights in some of the little villages in the valley below. Then they heard a murmur of voices and the party soon came upon several other belated travellers.

It was quite a stretch homeward, traversing the

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long windings of the road which steadily led down, but in due time they all reached the little village of Les Praz and later on Chamonix. Like many another trip, "all's well that ends well," and that afternoon's experience so trying at the time, has doubtless become one of the most interesting memories of that autumn visit.

In writing of Chamonix, a few words about glaciers may not be out of place. There is probably no spot where these huge rivers of ice show more fantastic form or appear in more wonderful way than at Chamonix. Tyndall made many of his investigations here. To him, more than to others, is due the discovery of many of the secrets of the Alps. He largely took the initiative and that which he began, others carried on, until now in many places in the mountains there are scientific stations, where the snows are still studied, where atmospheric conditions are noted and where calculations and deductions are made.

Many of these discoveries have no interest for the general public. To some they seem prosaic, with no practical value and apparently are a waste of time. It needed a dramatic touch to awaken any enthusiasm and this came in the finding out that glaciers moved ! This motion is slow and imperceptible to the eye, and when the theory was first advanced it met with ridicule and denial until demonstration proved it. This came in time, in the bodily appearance at the lower ends of glaciers of some of those persons who had been lost on them on the heights above.

A CLIMB ABOVE THE CLOUDS

At one place, the body of a little child was found, and upon investigation, it appeared that this little boy had been lost above a long while back. At the lower end of another glacier in the Bernese Oberland, the body of a pedlar, with his pack also preserved, came out. This traveller had been lost years before. Another proof was that of finding the bodies of the three guides of a Dr. Hamel who had been lost on Mont Blanc in 1820. Forty years later their bodies appeared at the lower end of the Glacier des Bossons.

Such discoveries leave little room for doubt. Yet a more striking one still is that of Mr. Henry Arkwright and his party, who had been swept to their death by an avalanche on Mont Blanc and whose bodies after thirty years were found close to the end of the glacier, having come down intact about nine thousand feet !

There is a story current, that the wife of a climber who had perished on Mont Blanc years ago resolved to find his body, if possible. She caused scientific calculations to be made and when the probable time arrived, after long years intervening, she, then an old lady, came to the mountains and waited. There, not very far from the date anticipated, she saw the dead body of her husband in the ice, preserved as he had been when killed, a young man, dressed in a style now old-fashioned ! What a strange reflection is here : the living woman, bowed with age ; the dead man, in all the appearance of youth !

How few people realize the depth and extent of a glacier ! The great Aletsch Glacier is estimated to

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consist of sufficient snow and ice to build a London, or Paris or New York ! The Mer de Glace is so large that the ground covered would make a fine harbour for ships ! The Gorner Glacier, with those running into it, fills an expanse larger than many a lake ! And all of these are at the top many hundreds of feet in depth. Their influence upon the watershed of the world must be tremendous, and it is worth remembering that some of the greatest rivers of Europe, which meet the commerce of the world, arise amid the valleys and peaks of the country of snow and ice.

Returning again to the occurrence of the "mer de brouillards" their coming changes all of the conditions of a climb or a walk so far as the views are concerned. Those familiar with Chamonix well know the high level walk or trail which now runs far above the valley in undulating zigzag from the Mer de Glace to the Glacier des Bossons. On a clear day the outlook is very impressive. At the start on leaving the Hôtel Montanvers there is a very fine view up the Mer de Glace to the huge basin of ice surrounded by the peaks of the Aiguilles and backed by the Grands Jorasses. As the climb continues, this view is scarcely hidden from sight by a turn of the path before the Mont Blanc range comes before one, in all of its stupendous mantle of snow, huge, wide-spreading and impressive, looking down upon the tiny vale and village of Chamonix.

The sea of clouds causes such a trip to be like a dream walk, so fantastic and unnatural at times,

A CLIMB ABOVE THE CLOUDS

appear the familiar points. Late one autumn this tour was taken by some persons who knew the place well. It may be worthy of note to the superstitious that this most successful walk, as it turned out to be, was taken on a Friday, the thirteenth of the month, after a night spent in room number thirteen of the comfortable but rather primitive Hôtel Montanvers !

The morning was very cold. Snow was over the ground, the bushes being white with the flakes, the rocks covered with a sheet of ice and the streams partly frozen. In the night the mist had hidden the Mer de Glace but now in the early dawn everything was clear but white and ghostly, with the stars growing dim in the coming day.

Now that the sun had risen the valley was found completely shut out by cloud, while far above overhead was the blue sky. During the journey parts of this cloud would rise, for a moment shrouding everything and then revealing in a weirdly fantastic way parts of the mountain ranges : soaring peaks with imaginary bases and seas and lakes of cloud in impossible spots. Then from time to time suddenly and unexpectedly would appear for a moment the whole stretch of Mont Blanc all glorious in the sunlight.

Such an experience is impressive from the feeling of loneliness which it gives, for there is a great sense of utter isolation and at times one could not but think of those words of Scripture : " they feared as they entered into the cloud," for while the walk was in reality free from danger such mists formed what seemed like yawning chasms and engulfing seas.

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Tyndall's description of the Jungfrau coming out of the clouds is very similar. This mountain had been quite hidden, "wrapped with a vapoury veil around her." Now she was seen "pure and beautiful" an impression "not that of vastness or sublimity but of loveliness not to be described . . . right above the snow curve purple clouds hung perfectly motionless, giving depth to the spaces between them. There was something saintly in the scene. Anything more exquisite I have never beheld!" The same scene finds its counterpart in the great "white mountain" above the vale of Chamonix.



IN THE ZERMATT VALLEY

[To face p. 51.]

CHAPTER IV

THE HEART OF THE ALPS

THOSE who would reach the very heart of the Alps and look upon a scene of unparalleled grandeur must go into the Valais to Zermatt.

The way up the valley is that which follows the river Visp. It is a delightful journey. The little stream is never still. It will scarcely keep confined to the banks or within the stone walls which in many places protect the shores. The river dances along as if seeking to be free. For the most part it is a torrent, sweeping swiftly past the solid masonry and descending the steep bed in a series of wild leaps or artificial waterfalls, with wonderful effects of sunlight seen in the showers of spray. Fed as it is by many mountain streams, the Visp is always full, and the more so, when in summer the melting ice adds to its volume. Then it is a sight long remembered, as roaring, rollicking, rushing along it is a brawling mass of waters, often working havoc with banks, road, village and pastures. If one never saw a mountain, the sight of the Visp would more than repay, but as it is, one's attention is taxed to the uttermost not to miss anything of this little rushing river and at the same time get the charming views of

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the Weisshorn, the Breithorn and the other snow summits which appear over the mountain spurs surrounding the head of the valley.

The first impression on reaching Zermatt is one of disappointment. Maps and pictures generally lead the traveller to think that from the village he will see the great semicircle of snow peaks which surround the valley, but upon arrival he finds that he must go further up to see them, for all of them are hidden from view except the Matterhorn.

This mountain, however, is seen in all its grandeur, fierce and frowning, and to an imaginative mind bending forward as if threatening and trying to shake off the little snow that appears here and there on its side. It dominates the whole scene and leaves an indelible impress on the mind, so that one can never picture Zermatt without the Matterhorn.

Zermatt as a place is a curious combination : a line of hôtels in juxtaposition with a village of chalets, unsophisticated peasants shoulder to shoulder with people of fashion ! There are funny little shops, here showing only such simple things as are needed by the dwellers in the Valais, there exhibiting really beautiful articles in dress and jewelry to attract the summer visitors, while at convenient spots are the inevitable tea-rooms, where "Thé, Café, Limonade, Confiserie," minister to the coming crowds of an afternoon.

The Seiler hôtels popularize the place and although others now bid for the tourists' patronage, the former are always sought by those attracted by the old

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associations or who like the ways obtaining there. The "Mont Rose" is still the "rendez-vous" of the climbers, and conversation there is always well flavoured with mountain experiences and adventures on the heights.

Guides galore wait in front of the Mont Cervin; ice-axes, ropes, nailed boots, rucksacks and all the paraphernalia of the mountains are seen on every side, and a walk along the one main thoroughfare introduces one into the life of a climbing centre, interesting to a degree and often very amusing from the miscellaneous collection of people there.

Perhaps the first thing one cares to see at Zermatt is the village Church with the adjoining Churchyard. The Church, dedicated to Saint Maurice, a favourite Saint in the Valais and Rhône district, is plain but interesting and in parts is quite old. Near it is a little mortuary Chapel. In most parts of Switzerland, it is the custom, after the bodies of the dead have been buried a certain length of time, to remove the remains to the "charnel house," allowing the graves to be used again and thus not encroaching upon the space reserved and consecrated in the Churchyard, but we do not think that this strange custom obtains at Zermatt.

In the Churchyard is a monument to Michel Auguste Croz, the guide, and near by are the graves of the Reverend Charles Hudson and Mr. Hadow. These three, with Lord Francis Douglas were killed in Mr. Whymper's first ascent of the Matterhorn. The body of Lord Francis Douglas has never been

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found. It is probably deep in some crevasse or under the snows which surround the base of the Matterhorn.

The inscription on the monument to Croz, written in French, records that he was "a man brave and devout, loved by his comrades, respected by travellers" and that in him was lost "a courageous man and a faithful guide." On Mr. Hadow's grave, after the inscription, is the text, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy Sight," and on the tomb of Mr. Hudson, "Be ye therefore also ready." A third grave quite near is that of a Mr. William Knyvet Wilson, who was killed by a fall on the Riffelhorn. This bears the text: "It is I: be not afraid."

The English Church stands a little above the level of the village, opposite the Hôtel du Mont Cervin. In its tiny "God's Acre" rest those who, while climbing, have perished on the mountains: a snow-storm, a fall, a shower of stones, a flash of lightning ending the lives of those, who, perhaps thoughtless of danger, went forth gaily, laughing and singing on the way! One very pathetic sight is the grave of an old man of seventy-nine years, who in 1897 was lost in the summer and his body found in the early autumn, in the shadow of a rock, as if sleeping.

So death comes when least expected on the mountain's lonely heights even as it does in the city's crowded streets! It is no respecter of persons; it visits "all sorts and conditions of men," and well one little grave in this far distant Churchyard sets

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forth the truth and reminder : " In the midst of life, we are in death."

This is the open-air record of the catastrophes of the mountain. In the Musée near by is the indoor reminder in the pictures or relics of those who have perished. It is a gruesome little place, yet full of fascination, for death on the mountains always seems so full of pathos and mystery ! The most trivial relics seem to assume a sanctity, for as one looks at a faded photograph, a torn hat, a pair of worn boots, a broken ice-axe, and perhaps a Prayer Book, there comes the picture of the last moments of the owners, who perhaps alone, or with equally illfated comrades faced death in all its awfulness, cut off from all the comforts of religion and the love of friends, hurried away in a moment's time or lingering on in unspeakable agony until nature could stand no more.

Jean Antoine Carrel, a very noted guide, illustrates the coming of death on the mountains, where he was called on the Matterhorn in 1890. Carrel was over sixty and started on this fatal trip, much fatigued from previous hard climbing. He and his companions were caught in a fearful storm, a hurricane with snow, hail and lightning, accompanied with intense cold. They were several days on the mountain, not being able to ascend to the top and having a most difficult and dangerous time in going down. Carrel led for the most part and after his usual splendid manner, but the storm was so bad that it was almost impossible to know the right direction. When the worst was over and they were practically

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in safety, Carrel's strength gave out. He had to be carried down. He could hardly speak and became very cold and still. His companions tried everything to revive him, rubbing him, shaking him, calling to him and giving him cognac but they saw that he was dying. They asked him if he wished to commend his soul to God, and almost immediately upon his whispering "yes" he fell back dead in the snow, a fine example of a brave man, faithful to his duty, dying a heroic death.

For the more extended climbs or for excursions in the direction of the Schwarzsee, the Staffel Alp or the Trift, Zermatt is the starting-point. The place abounds in walks, most of them being the first part of the routes to the high mountains, so that those who are fond of tramping but not of climbing can reach high elevations with a little hard work but no great difficulty. Some of these "midway" places may be visited on muleback, and with the railway now up to the Gorner-Grat, there are few persons who may not see this wonderful region of snow peaks.

The trip to the Schwarzsee is the first stage on the Matterhorn route. It leads through the village, past the Gorner Gorges (which one may visit by a slight *détour*) and then enters some very pretty woods, from which one issues on to the bare green meadows which clothe the upper part of the steep slope of the mountain. As one mounts this "zig-zag" path, it sometimes seems as if it would never end, and for all the magnificent views which it affords,

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one is always glad that it is over, as it exactly fulfils the conditions of a "grind."

From the Schwarzsee (8,495 feet, where there is one of the excellent Seiler hôtels) there is a fine survey of the Matterhorn, and also a splendid panorama on three sides, one view up the glaciers towards the Monte Rosa, another over the valley to the Dent Blanche and other great peaks, and still another to the far distant Bernese Oberland. Near the hôtel is a little lake and a tiny chapel, where Mass is sometimes said. The reflection in the still waters of the lake is very lovely.

From the Schwarzsee, trips are made to the Hörnli (another stage on the way to the Matterhorn), to the Gandegg Hut, across moraine and glacier and to the Staffel Alp, over the green meadows.

The Hörnli (9,490 feet high) is the ridge running out from the base of the Matterhorn. It is reached by a stiff climb over rocks and a huge heap of fallen stones and debris. From it, the view is similar to that from the Schwarzsee, but much finer, the Théodule Glacier being seen to great advantage. Above the Hörnli towers the Matterhorn, huge, fierce, frowning, threatening. Every few moments comes a heavy, muffled sound, as new showers of falling stones come down. This is one of the main dangers in climbing the peak itself, for from base to summit, the Matterhorn is really a decaying mountain, the stones rolling away through the action of the storms, the frosts and the sun. Everywhere is

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disintegration and great masses of stone are seen on every side. Stones cover the Hörnli; stones are scattered over the Théodule; and more stones are continually falling, the summit being like a giant mortar, ever sending volleys down.

There is something very impressive about these falling stones. They make one think. "The world passeth away" seems to whisper the Matterhorn, as its crumbling rocks tell the coming end of created things. Many centuries have passed and for untold ages the mountains have reared their giant crests. Many more centuries may come and go and these same great summits still be seen, but nevertheless slowly but surely they are nearing their end, for they are but the playthings of time.

Spring and summer, autumn and winter do their part, each in its several way, summer melting the snows and drying up the moisture, winter freezing and splitting the rocks, while the spring freshet and the autumn storm, the avalanche and the landslide supplement the steady work of destruction. Each time of thaw, each time of frost, each time of rain makes rocks and earth crumble and break away, to join the increasing mass of debris below. Some day, there will be a new Heaven and a new earth, when the once majestic Matterhorn will be no more !

Returning to the Schwarzsee, one can easily descend to the Staffel Alp, about 7,045 feet high. It is really nothing but a walk down a steep slope of stones and grass.

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There is a little hôtel at the Staffel Alp. From it the Matterhorn looks like another mountain. Then it is that there is seen the resemblance (and a very marked one to an imaginative person) to a couching lion, but the impressive majesty of the Matterhorn is largely gone as seen from here. There is also a fine near view of the valley of the Zmutt glacier and across to the Dent Blanche and the huge wall of rock to the left.

This wall ends the valley and over it come some of the worst wind-storms that arise. Storms do not waste time on the way. They move with great rapidity. The air may be perfectly still, so still that you do not feel a breath, and a few moments later there may be such a wind and storm that safety at once suggests the nearest shelter of a rock or tree. On a calm day, however, the Staffel Alp is a lovely spot, sweet, green and picturesque. The return to Zermatt by this route is most attractive, the way passing through woods and along the edge of the Gorge.

A very interesting excursion from Zermatt for good trampers is up to the Trift Hôtel at the head of a high level valley of the same name. This is the route followed by many of the climbers who ascend the cluster of peaks situated here. The first part of the trip is a steep, hard walk from Zermatt (5,315 feet altitude) to the little Café Edelweiss built on the brow of a great rock promontory, passing on the way the wild gorge of the Trift (exploited as all such places are, by guide and galleries and the charge of

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a fee !). Another way to the Café Edelweiss leads by a little garden of deer and other animals found hereabouts.

From the Café (6,495 feet elevation) the way is very picturesque. Up and up it goes, through the steep, narrow ravine, always alongside the brawling torrent. In one's ears is "the sound of many waters," the rush of a fall, the ripple over pebbles, the slumber song of a quiet pool. The gorge or ravine is green, but most wild and romantic. Zermatt is lost to view, but across the valley on the other side is a fine panorama of the peaks of the Mischabelhörner near Saas.

In a basin, some 7,570 feet high, stands the Trift Hôtel. It is quite primitive and plain, but just suits the place, with its barren bottom below the semicircle of mountains. This is the starting-point for the Ober-Gabelhorn, Zinal-Rothhorn and others, with descent to Zinal.

Somehow one is more conscious of the solitude of the mountains here than in other of the lower levels. Many persons come here, but on the way they are largely hidden from one another by the windings of the ravine, and near the Trift Hôtel it is easily possible to get away entirely alone. Man may be a social creature but it is good for him sometimes to be apart from his fellows. For in the stillness and solitude of the heights one can think. He is above the world and nearer God. The aims, ambitions, struggles, desires and passions of life are forgotten for the nonce as in the silence, broken only by the musical murmur

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of running waters there come nobler aspirations, higher ideals, holier standards.

In the bosom of nature, GOD speaks. Nature is not god, but GOD is there immanent. How insignificant seems man as contrasted with his Creator ! The Eternal One in communion with the soul of him He made, whose span of life He holds within the hollow of His hand ! The fleeting, feeble powers of man are seen compared with the Divine Omnipotence, Whose power is symbolized by the giant forces lying latent in the everlasting hills ! God may be recognized and acknowledged anywhere and everywhere, but on the mountain side He seems to whisper words of wisdom to the soul.

There, up by the Trift, one's thoughts seem elevated and exalted and it is no mere play of fancy that sees the truth of those beautiful words of Byron's in "Childe Harold"—

"Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean
This is not solitude ; 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms and view her
Stores unrolled ;
Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are *least* alone ;
A truth which through one's being then doth melt
And purifies from self ; it is a tone
The soul and source of music which makes known
Eternal harmony."

From Zermatt a most interesting trip may be made to the Schonbühl. On the map it looks like an easy excursion. In the performance it is a long steep tramp of many miles, following the brawling Visp for a while

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and then turning to the right up the Zmutt valley, always steadily ascending.

The outlook is very picturesque, especially when looking back, where one has the ravine in the foreground and across it and back of it the Matterhorn and far over to the left, with a long perspective, Monte Rosa and its near neighbours.

After the road passes the Staffel Alp (on the other side of the ravine) the Matterhorn is seen from the back, and a very strange sight it is, being ugly and stunted in appearance and quite a contrast to its majestic contour as viewed from the Gorner-Grat or Zermatt.

Where the path ends there is a further walk over a long moraine and then a short steep climb to the little house or cabin of the Schonbühl.

Here one faces the Dent d'Hérens and looks down upon the glaciers descending from the Dent Blanche and looks up at the great black wall of the Tête Blanche.

It is a walk that repays. It is wild, lonely and barren. It takes one into quite a different region and gives one an entirely different point of view, enlarging one's knowledge of the mountains and satisfying the curiosity so often expressed by those who see the Matterhorn from the Riffel Alp: "I wonder what it looks like from the Schonbühl?"

The little mountain huts which one finds are surprising little places in their way. They are strongly built and their building must have involved, in many cases, both danger and difficulty in the

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getting to the place the material required and in some spots even the erection of it when there. These little "cabanes" form a shelter for climbers and those overtaken by the mountain storms, as well as for the ordinary walker who stops at them in the course of a tramp. The post of caretaker is no sinecure, however, but is full of hard work when people are there and full of loneliness when the place is empty.

In walking about Zermatt and in climbing the neighbouring Alps one often comes upon the cattle and wild goats which are so frequently seen in Switzerland. There is also an enclosure on a little hill in front of and above the Hôtel Mont Cervin where there are kept some chamois. These little creatures are as curious of the visitors as are those who watch and study them.

It is said that climbers learn much from the animals which live on the mountains. These creatures who are native to the place are most nimble and sure of foot. It is very interesting to watch them in apparently inaccessible places, following their movements with the aid of a telescope. Frequently seeing these animals close at hand and noting their ways and habits, it is said, teaches many lessons which are helpful: in going up and over difficult places. Be that as it may, these little creatures seem a part of the place and are surely wonderful in the way they get around.

In making the high ascents the start is generally made in the morning or afternoon to some point about midway up the mountain, where a few hours of sleep

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are taken. The real climb begins either at night or in the very early morning, often by the aid of lanterns but preferably in the moonlight or starlight. This early start enables the travellers to reach the summits at dawn, before the sun has begun to melt the surface of the snow and before the wind has arisen. At such a time there is less danger and a finer view.

So it is at Zermatt, in the very heart of the Alps, that almost every day sees some lover of the heights at early dawn on some summit, as the sun's kisses bring the blush to the smooth white expanse of snow.



THE MATTERHORN FROM HÔTEL RIFFEL ALP

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CHAPTER V

AT THE RIFFEL ALP

TO see the splendid array of snow peaks and glaciers which makes the sky line above Zermatt, one must leave the valley and walk or climb to a higher level. An ideal spot for this is the Hôtel Riffel Alp. Both the situation and the Hôtel outrival and surpass any similar places in the Alps. "Far from the madding crowd," on a little plateau bounded by pines and pastures stands the Hôtel, some two thousand feet above Zermatt and at an altitude of over 7,000 feet. The outlook is superb, the air splendid, the quiet most restful. Two little churches, the one for Roman Catholics, the other for members of the Church of England minister to the spiritual needs of the visitors and stamp religion upon a situation grand and sublime.

Those who come here are lovers of the mountains who enjoy the open life. It is a place not so much for "les grands excursions" as for long walks, easy climbs and the beginnings of mountaineering. Many persons spend the entire day out, preferring to eat their déjeuner "informally," perched above some safe precipice, or on a glacier-bordered rock or in the shade of the cool woods, but there are always

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some who linger both morning and afternoon on the terrace with its far expanse of view, with the bright sunshine streaming down upon them.

One great charm of the Riffel Alp is the proximity to the snow. An hour will bring one either to the Gorner Glacier or to the Findelen Glacier, while a somewhat longer time will lead to other stretches of snow and ice, where the climber may sit and survey the séracs and crevasses or walk about on the great frozen rivers. This is said to be beneficial to the nervous system as many physicians maintain that the glaciers contain a large amount of radium.

Before essaying any of the longer or harder trips however, the traveller first of all generally goes to the Gorner-Grat, the rocky ridge that runs up from Zermatt to a point 10,290 feet high. Many people still walk up, but since the railroad was built, even those who feel it to be a matter of conscience to inveigh against any kind of progress which ministers to the pleasures of the masses, are found among those who prefer to ascend by electricity. The trip up is often made very amusing as among the crowds are always some, who knowing really nothing of the place, feel it incumbent upon themselves to point out all of the peaks, in a way quite discomposing to anybody familiar with the locality or versed in geography !

Quite a luxurious little hôtel now surmounts the top of the Gorner-Grat. In it, about it and above it, on the walled terrace assembles a motley crowd every clear day in summer, clad in every variety of costume, conventional and unconventional. "All sorts and

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conditions of men " are there, of all the great nations, perched on the rocks at every point of vantage, oblivious to the fact of the inappropriateness of it all ! The Church, Law and Medicine ; the Artist, the Architect, the Philosopher ; the Author, the Poet, the Journalist ; the cultivated tourist, the intelligent traveller and the cheap tripper, all behold the scene from their varying points of view, mental as well as physical. Some sit silently drinking in the splendid panorama spread before their eyes ; others excitedly splutter out words of comment, criticism and comparison, while still others, are busy arranging with guides some prospective excursion.

An ordinary scene would be ruined by such a crowd, but not so the Gorner-Grat. The very majesty and magnificence of the view make one forget the vapourings of mere man, and the Glory of God, so overpoweringly revealed in those regions of perpetual snow, drives other impressions away. And if one wishes to be alone, it is easily possible by walking a little further along the ridge where some rock will shut out all sight of man and the wind will drive away the sound of voices.

It is doubtful if there is any view comparable with that of the Gorner-Grat. There is what is called a "near view," and there is also what is known as a "distant view," for completely surrounded by snow peak and glacier, the eye passes from valley to summit, resting on that wonderful stretch of shining white which forms the sky line. To say that one can count dozens of glaciers, that he can see fifty summits,

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that Monte Rosa, the Lyskamm, the Twins, the Breithorn, the Matterhorn, the Dent Blanche, the Weiss-horn, with many other mountains of the Valais and Oberland form a complete circle of snow peaks, may establish the geography of the place but it does not convey any but the faintest picture of the sublime grandeur of the scene. The garrulous tripper may not appreciate or realize one half that he sees, but the lover of nature, the admirer of beauty finds in those stupendous masses of snow and in those giant pyramids of rock that which appeals to the very highest and holiest sentiments in man, the eye being the guide to the mind and to the soul, the far-spreading view being but a pathway as it were into those even richer realms of religion. For there is no denying the spiritual appeal which the mountains make to the thoughtful man or to the religiously minded.

An exciting experience for novices is to go with a guide from the Gorner-Grat to the Hohtäligrat and thence down to the Findelen Glacier. It looks dangerous but it is not really so, if the climber is careful, for although there is a sheer descent on either side of the arête or ridge which leads from the one point to the other, the way is never narrow and only over easy rocks and snow.

The Hohtäligrat is almost 11,000 feet in altitude and has a splendid survey of the sky line. One looks up at snow, one looks down at snow, one looks around at snow! From the beautiful summits of Monte Rosa, the eye passes in a complete circle, up and down, seeing in succession the white stretches of the

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Lyskamm, the Twins, the Breithorn, the Dent Blanche, the Weisshorn, the Bernese Oberland, the Mischabel, the Dom, the Cima di Jazzi and other snow peaks, with their great glistening glaciers below, showing in strong contrast the occasional rock pyramids like the Matterhorn and the group around the Rothhorn.

From the Hohtäligrat to the Findelen Glacier is quite a long way, most of the journey being through a series of little valleys, a perfect wilderness of stones, rugged and romantic, with wonderfully coloured rocks. The start from the summit, however, is different. A seemingly very steep snow slope needs to be descended, and here the party should be roped, for although soon traversed, there is always a danger not only of starting a miniature snow avalanche, if there has recently been new snow, but also of slipping where there is little to check one's speed. Reasonable care will eliminate the danger and leave enough excitement to delight the enthusiastic! And all the time there will be the wonderful survey of the sky line.

Another trip for those who never attempt the great peaks, is to go to the Bêtemp's Cabin on the Monte Rosa. Starting from the Riffel Alp, the little zigzag trail on the slopes of the mountain leads up to the level of the Riffelhaus and then past a little basin, called by the English "the cricket grounds," and through a ravine-like valley, where the marmot abounds, to the foot of the Riffelhorn. Then the path continues in the direction of Monte Rosa, far up above the Gorner Glacier, to which after some distance

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it descends. The Glacier is then crossed to the rocks of Monte Rosa.

The journey needs to be carefully made, as the Glacier, while quite level, is full of very wide crevasses and deep water holes and in the middle is traversed longitudinally by a deep "ravine," cut in the ice by the waters underneath. The sides of this "ravine" are a pale blue and the waters rushing through it are a light green. The very large expanse of the glacier is seen to great advantage, and a novice could easily become lost amid the upturned ice and rocks near the holes and crevasses.

When Monte Rosa is reached, it is but a short although a steep scramble until the Bêtemps hut is reached, situated at an altitude of 9,190 feet. From here the views of the sky line are quite different in their perspective, especially the Matterhorn, while south of it is now seen the Dent d'Hérens.

The Riffelhorn is quite the climb from the Riffel Alp. There are many ways up it, some so difficult that the most proficient experts have to use great skill, some so much easier that a good guide and rope will prevent any danger other than an ordinary fall or slip. Nevertheless it is foolish to speak of the Riffelhorn as if climbing it is mere child's play. A guide is necessary, a rope should be used continually, there is a danger of dizziness, and some of the steeper places are quite difficult. It is all very well to be pulled up, but that is not climbing. If one really *climbs*, the hour required for the ascent of this little peak will need even the expert to

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exercise care and will be to the novice an exciting experience.

The Riffelhorn has a history. It must have been climbed in the stone age, for some years ago, two tourists who were amusing themselves by that inexcusable and inconsiderate pastime of rolling down stones, found under a large slab an ancient javelin. One may wonder what the prehistoric possessor thought of the view!

This little peak has also witnessed two tragedies, one the death of a climber by a fall, the other the shooting of a shepherd, who had gone insane. The latter had lost his mind, through the loneliness and isolation of his calling and becoming mad had fled from every human being, making his refuge on the Riffelhorn. His greetings of showers of stones to those who came near so angered a chamois hunter that he shot the poor wretch.

Over on the Findelen side of the Riffel Alp there are many excursions. This glacier in the lower part is quite safe and here the would-be mountaineer disports himself, playing at cutting steps and crossing crevasses and at mid-day refreshing the inner man by a luncheon partaken of on some big boulder, quite "the monarch of all he surveys." Above the Glacier is the pretty Stelli-see where cattle graze, and the Fluh-hut which climbers use, going to and coming from the Strahlhorn and Rimpfischhorn. To descend to Zermatt on this side there is a picturesque path leading past Findelen and giving particularly fine views of the Zmutt and Trift Valleys.

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The Riffel Alp is largely affected by the English. They have made it what it is, and although many other nationalities now patronize this lovely spot, its original character still predominates, the facetious distinction between the two dining-rooms as the "House of Lords" and "House of Commons" still obtains, and Bishops, Deans, and Canons of the Anglican Communion still dignify the place with an imposing array of kneebreeches and gaiters!

When night closes in and the walkers and climbers have come back from the labours and pleasures of the day, unconventionality largely gives way to the greater formality of drawing-room and lounge, and man who prided himself all day on his love of solitude finds himself by night quite a social creature in the refined environment of the Riffel Alp, where "Riffers" who delight in traversing glaciers may still joy in gliding over the equally smooth ballroom floor to the melodious music of the waltz.

There is always a rivalry among the lovers of the high Alps as to which is the best situation there. This feeling is most keen among the visitors to the Riffel Alp, the Eggishorn, the Bel Alp, the Scheidegg, Murren and other well-known resorts, all of which are rightly famed, but for all their merits, the palm must be conceded to the Riffel Alp, whose superb position is unrivalled on account of the variety of its views, the number of its walks and the vast amphitheatre which intervenes between it and the great peaks, showing them in their proper proportion and relation.

AT THE RIFFEL ALP

Few persons who have stopped at the Riffel Alp can have failed to have noticed the exceeding brilliancy of the heavens as seen there on a clear night. Of course the higher one is up the brighter should seem the stars, but even at the same altitude these "lamps of heaven" appear here to shine as nowhere else. Many of the smaller ones, unseen at very low levels, are clearly perceived here. In fact, the heavens are indescribably lovely on a summer night and the little child's verses frequently come to mind : "Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are !" for notwithstanding the revelation of religion or the discoveries of science, the stars are ever sources of mystery as well as gems of beauty and the watching them is stimulating alike to one's fancy and to one's faith. Flashing, scintillating, calm and untroubled they look down upon and light a world ever restless with the ceaseless movement of life and the endless war of men struggling for sustenance or supremacy. What have the stars seen ! What do they see now ! Inanimate as they are, as one looks upon them on a clear night in those Alpine heights, they seem almost things of life, associated with the history of the world and recording the events of all times, and when light after light will go out at the Riffel Alp and the hôtel sleep in that mountain stillness, the stars still twinkle and shine far above in the heavens !

There is a peculiarity to be noticed about the heavens as looked at from the Riffel Alp. The stars farthest away, or on the horizon so to speak, flash and twinkle, while those directly above shine with a

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bright steady light. One loves to watch and while watching to think. Dreams come in the sunlight, sentiment is stimulated by the moon, but the effect of the stars is different. Their beauty is softer and withal colder but just as lovely. And as one looks above on a starlight night at the Riffel Alp the feeling is religious and the winds seem to whisper the words of the Psalmist : " The heavens declare the Glory of God."



THE THIÉODULE PASS FROM THE GORNER-GRAT

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CHAPTER VI

THE TOP OF THE THÉODULE

THE sky line to the right of the Breithorn looking south is marked by a slight depression. This is the pass of the Théodule. One would hardly think that people would cross the Alps by a Pass almost 11,000 feet high, simply to get over the mountains, but they once did so. Roman coins have frequently been found, showing that before the Christian era there were not a few who traversed these snows, and since then, far up to modern days (when new and easier routes were opened), there was considerable crossing in pursuit of trade. Quite an interesting legend also relates that the Devil himself made the journey, carrying a Church-bell over the Théodule, in fulfilment of some agreement with the Bishop of Sion, in the Valais! One might fancy that the Prince of Evil might have incurred the danger of a chill!

In going on the trip, one may start from Zermatt or from the Riffel Alp. Both routes come together at the Gorner Glacier. This huge river of ice is not so harmless as some—especially novices—seem to think. In some places, it is, of course, perfectly smooth and consequently very easy and safe to traverse, but it is always changing and frequently

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shrinking and is very dangerous in spots, where deep crevasses, water holes, and "ravines" make great care essential. To get "lost" on a glacier, whose expanse one can plainly see, at first thought seems impossible, but some persons to their surprise and discomfort, have found this danger only too easily realized. One party of young men and girls some years ago was forced to spend most of the night amid those weird, fantastic, frozen masses !

It is surprising how hot it can be on a "cold" glacier. On some days in summer the sun fairly scorches, and it is not until the wind begins to be felt blowing down the ice fields, that the sun and the wind "neutralize" each other.

When once on the Gorner Glacier, the way is taken up it for quite a distance, until the point is reached where the Lower Théodule Glacier joins it. Here the climber leaves the former for the latter and continues to ascend, over much steeper ice, but by keeping close to the rocks at the right, not finding any crevasses of consequence.

As one goes onward and upward, the mountains are constantly changing in the grouping that meets the eye. The Matterhorn especially loses its sharp pyramidal form, while Monte Rosa is more and more dwarfed by the lower summits to its right which are nearer the climber. Directly ahead there looms up the ice fall near the foot of the Little Matterhorn with the wide expanse of snow fields of the Upper Théodule.

When up the Glacier to an altitude of about 9,500 feet, the ice is left for the steep rocks to the right,

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which after a severe scramble of about half an hour or less lead one to the Gandegg Hut, called the Lower Théodule, built on a little plateau about 10,000 feet high. One cannot say much for the cabin, although night quarters can be had there for a few people, and those who wait upon the climbers are most attentive and hospitable, but the view is most magnificent, with a very different perspective than from other points. A good rest is generally taken at the Gandegg and one's "impedimenta" reduced by eating luncheon. It is strange how the distribution of weight from the outside to the inside makes the journey easier in every way ! So largely is life made up of eating and drinking and perhaps being merry !

On leaving the Gandegg Hut, the most "exciting" part of the excursion begins, as the Upper Théodule Glacier has to be crossed. This is always badly crevassed but is considered "safe" by climbers. One party reached the ice when for several days there had been heavy falls of snow. Not a crevasse could be seen, for a foot of snow covered everything. Yet the crevasses were there all the same, as was occasionally evidenced by the sudden tightening of the rope as some one of the party would find the snow drop beneath his foot as he stepped forward.

The whole scene is now changed : the Matterhorn looks like an ugly, deformed, stooping, humpbacked giant. Close at hand appear the Dent d'Hérens on the right and the Breithorn and the Little Matterhorn on the left, but the great features are the tremendous masses of snow which form the glaciers, snow fields

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and ice falls in the sort of basin, dominated by the white of crest of the Théodule.

At the top of the Théodule Pass is another Cabane. It stands at an altitude of 10,900 feet. One side looks down on Italy, the other side on Switzerland. Breuil, associated with many of the most noted Alpinists, is far below and off in the distance the eye can see as far as the Graian Alps. Pastures and rocks and trees are there in the valleys, but all around on the heights snow !

No pen can describe, no brush picture the exquisite beauty and splendour of those great white stretches shining in the sun. Peak after peak, glacier after glacier is surveyed yet "the eye is not satisfied with seeing" !

And as the whole scene is taken in little by little, summit and snow field, crevasse and sérac, wonderful parts of a wonderful whole, perhaps there come to the mind those words of Scripture : "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow ?" treasures indeed, but like gems to be found by searching. For these are not ordinary snows here, beautiful as they may be when their fleecy flakes fill the air on a winter's day or lie like a soft white coverlet over a country landscape. It is all different in the Alps. These are the everlasting snows, even the virgin snows in places. Generations have passed, men have come and gone, but the great white depths of the mountain fastnesses are still there. This is an impressive thought ! Yet the contrast between the shortness of human life and the duration of nature has its corollary in the

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converse hereafter, when heaven and earth will have passed away but man with his immortal soul will have an unending and glorious future.

The top of the Théodule shows many things about the everlasting snows. There the tremendous expanse of wonderful whiteness is fully realized, while where crevasses and séracs are seen may be noted the beauty of form and colour.

Few persons sufficiently appreciate the glaciers in their colouring. Yet if one glances down the great fissures which are generally found, these crevasses will show lovely shades of green and blue varying to crystal white and changing with every reflection of the sunlight. So too the séracs or pinnacles of ice are marvels of giant figures and fantastic forms, easily fancied to be frozen sentinels, guarding the approach to the glaciers and having inherent in them death-dealing power, often witnessed when even some slight concussion of the air sends them crashing down, carrying destruction with them.

Yet the greatest charm of all, to one who sees, lies in the exquisite beauty and delicacy of the flakes composing the snows, for they are perfect crystals, shaped by scientific laws ordained by God, gems and jewels, some like the petals of a flower, some like the stars in the skies, some like perfect geometrical figures, so beautiful that one thinks of the words of Saint Paul, "one star differeth from another star in glory."

And here comes in an incidental proof of God as the Creator and Controller of all things, for while man

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may make ice, he cannot make snow, whose fluttering flakes, so perfect in form and whiteness, can only be produced by the Divine Architect and Master Mind of the Universe !

Thus it is that on the top of the Théodule, the traveller feels as he has never felt before, that he is in a region majestic and mystical, with its miles and miles of untrodden white, and he cannot but carry away enduring memories of that beautiful scene.

There is an old story which well illustrates the influence of the high mountain summit. A man who had been a notorious evil liver for years, at last came to see the error of his wasted and misspent life, and there arose in him a great desire to expiate his wicked past. The idea came to him of becoming a hermit and making his retreat in some mountain. He had two pictures, one of Our LORD, one of the Blessed Virgin Mary. With these he sought out and climbed the highest mountain which he could find accessible, and there he lived the balance of his days in solitude and seclusion, engaged in prayer, penance and meditation upon his two religious pictures. He could have followed the same mode of expiation elsewhere or he might have chosen some wiser way, but to him the mountain spoke of the GOD Whom he had failed to serve before and of Whom he wished now to think.

This religious feeling is found in the writings of a miniature painter named Bourrit, who having once visited the Alps resolved henceforth to spend as much of his time there as possible. He saw in the mountains not so much man reconciling himself with GOD

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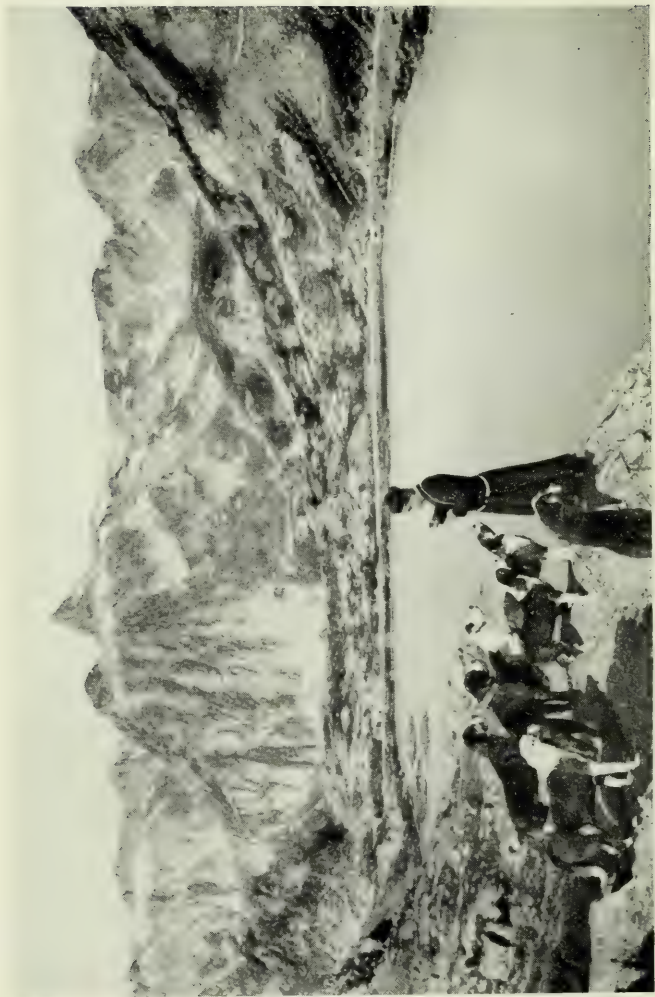
as man making peace with his fellows : "it is in fact the mountains that many men have to thank for their reconciliation with their fellows and with the human race, and it is there that the rulers of the world and the heads of nations ought to hold their meetings. Raised thus above the arena of passions and petty interests and placed more immediately under the influence of divine inspiration, one would see them descend the mountains, each like a new Moses, bringing with them codes of law based upon equity and justice." For all that this homily may be overdrawn it contains a great germ of truth.

Another distinguished man, Jean-Andre de Luc, born at Geneva in 1727, and quite a climber in his day, beautifully and graphically expressed his feelings on a mountain summit in these words : "We found ourselves on an immense expanse of snow of unvarying whiteness. The rays of the sun which was beginning to rise, reflected from the surface of the snow, showed how polished it was. We saw absolutely nothing but the snow and the sky, the former ending at the horizon in gently rounded hillocks, resembling the beautiful silvery clouds which sometimes float majestically in a pure atmosphere, and that idea precisely describes our sensations. We actually seemed to be afloat in the air, supported upon such a cloud."

Such thoughts and such experiences one may well realize on the top of the Théodule, where away from the world, amid surroundings of unparalleled grandeur, the troubles and trials of life are for the time forgotten

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and both body and soul are stimulated and uplifted in a manner hard to describe. It is this feeling in perfect harmony and accord with the spirit of the place, this soaring as it were on the wings of fancy, that brings a far deeper and more enduring pleasure than the mere "conquering" of a mountain.



A MONK AND DOGS OF THE GRAND SAINT BERNARD

[To face p. 83.]

CHAPTER VII

A VISIT TO THE GRAND SAINT BERNARD

ONE of the most interesting trips in Switzerland is a visit to the Hospice of the Great Saint Bernard. It is like a little world of its own, shut out from the larger world around and yet a place where the past and the present seem to meet and solitude and society come together. For in the lonely Hospice in the mountain wilderness the good Monks carry on a work now centuries old, in which they minister to the needs of modern life.

For centuries have most of the Alpine Passes been known, long before the summits had their virgin snows profaned by the foot of man. It is probable that the real Passes were far more traversed than they are to-day, for when there were no railways to delve into the bowels of the earth and in wonderful ways to work out various levels by means of spiral tunnels in the heart of the mountains, everyone who had to cross the Alps went overland. In winter this must always be a most perilous undertaking, on account of the snow, the wind and the storm, and one wonders at the hardihood of the poor travellers starting on such a journey, with very likely a pos-

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sibility of never returning or reaching their destination alive.

It was this danger that led to the institution of such Hospices as this of the Great Saint Bernard, where the Monks in their conception of the call and command of their Master, gave themselves to a life lonely and severe in the extreme, that they might be the means of helping and rescuing those in distress on the mountains and at the same time live in close communion with GOD and nature.

The Pass of the Great Saint Bernard was a well-known one long before the Hospice was built. Before the Christian era, the Romans used it as a highway across the Alps, constantly improving the road as travel over it increased. Many lives were lost however, as no material safeguards could obviate the danger from the elements and no one will ever know the number of souls who met their end in the blinding snows and chilling blasts of those Alpine heights.

To Bernard de Menthon is due the credit of the mountain Hospice. He was the originator of the idea and the founder of the institution. He has since been canonized as a Saint and he well deserved the honour, if it be a virtue to sacrifice oneself, as we believe, and to try and save the lives of one's fellows! It is no easy existence which Saint Bernard chose for himself and followers. The very aspect of the Pass is grand but gloomy. None of the softness of nature is seen. There is no verdure, no beauty of colouring, nothing but bleak, bare rock, great piles of

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stones and occasional patches of fallen snow. It is thoroughly exposed, the winds always moaning mournfully around the buildings. This is the scene in summer. In winter, it is, of course, one great expanse of snow, cold, cheerless, colourless, depressing in the extreme and all the more so because the experience of those days is largely a record of death, the memory of which seems to linger about the place, not even effaced by the bright throngs of visitors in summer.

The Hospice brought the Pass into greater prominence, crowned heads as well as noted men of all classes lavishing rich gifts upon the Order, and many people when the weather was good, came here to see the great building which had been erected. Now, alas, the once rich Hospice can barely pay expenses, for although it is said that over twenty thousand persons visit it annually, their offerings—for they are not allowed to pay for their entertainment—are but poor miserable pittances, and from tourists who come here for pleasure!

From the Swiss side the journey to the summit of the Pass is far from easy, as the road is steep and narrow and the stopping places primitive and uninviting. Although harder work, walking is preferable to driving, as the conveyances called "carriages" are most small and very uncomfortable, so much so that some people after a short trial leave them to plod upward on foot.

Tourists are not alone in walking. There are travellers who go in that way, as it is the only manner

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their pocket-books admit, and there are "pilgrims" who go, who think that the harder the journey is the greater will be the reward, for the Grand Saint Bernard is known far and wide among the peasants as a place of great sanctity, it being looked upon as an act of great merit to climb the Pass to the Hospice and there receive the Sacraments at the hands of the good monks and depart with their special blessing.

The trip begins at Martigny. First there is a level stretch, then a long steady climb, after which begins the real road to the Pass. The views are very lovely and while quite different in some ways excel all Passes except the famous Simplon. The scenery is very varied, the mountains are far enough off to give a good perspective, and the villages are most picturesque. The absence of snow peaks in any great number will be felt by some, but even a lover of such soon forgets the lack in the exceeding beauty and loveliness of the valleys.

Towards the top of the Pass, there is quite a transformation. Both the road and the scenery change, the first becoming more and more steep and stony, the latter showing more and more of savage grandeur, as the green smiling valleys are no longer seen, but in their place appear barren and rugged rocks and slopes, with the marks of the ravages wrought by storm, landslide and avalanche. The wind has fuller play and seems to moan in a mournful dirge-like manner, accentuating the characteristics of bleakness and desolation which obtain at the top of

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the Pass, all the more noticeable if the traveller arrives at dusk, just as the sun has disappeared behind the mountains.

In this dreary place stands the Hospice. The present buildings are not very old, the Hospice only dating from the 16th century and the Church from the 17th century, while the other structures, which have been built for the accommodation of strangers are comparatively new. Twelve Monks of the Augustinian Order are regularly in residence here. They come when about twenty years of age, but so severe is the climate, so hard the life and so stern the rule that after a service of about fifteen years, they generally have to seek a lower altitude, often ruined in health, with their powers completely sapped by the rigours and privations which they have endured.

Their ministry is truly a living sacrifice, for they not only cut themselves off from all that the world holds dear but also shorten their lives by many years. If Our LORD's words are true, as we hold them to be, that "*greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends,*" the saving and sheltering of thousands of travellers who otherwise would have perished in the winter storms, is a literal fulfillment of this text.

Although the Hospice and the adjoining Hostelry for the travellers are cheerless in the extreme, there is always a warm welcome from the Monks. No one, however poor, is refused bed and board for the night and there is no "distinction of persons." The

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hospitality is extended to all, free of charge, this being the invariable rule of the institution, but it is expected, and rightly so, that those who can do so will deposit a liberal offering in the Box provided for the purpose. The small receipts, however, show what a great abuse there is of this hospitality, for a large number of those who come in the summer could well afford to give and to give largely.

Upon arrival, the visitors are met by one of the grave-faced Monks, who opens the door and leads the newcomers to a little office, where another Monk assigns the rooms or the beds for the night. Originally the Hospice could accommodate all who applied, but now since the number has so much increased, all of the travellers are sent to the adjoining building provided for that special purpose.

The rooms are like little cells, only rather more comfortable than those generally occupied by the Monks. Each room contains a bed, a chair and a washstand, nothing else, while the walls are bare save for a Crucifix. Before the evening meal, the "guests" collect in a reception-room, which is the one festal-looking spot in the Hospice, for here on the walls and all about the apartment are gathered the gifts and presents of noted persons who have visited the Grand Saint Bernard and have left or sent remembrances.

Here is passed around the special Liqueur made by the Monks. It is looked upon as being very discourteous to refuse it, and in a few minutes many a stifled cough is heard and many a wry face is seen

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as the guests sip the strong cordial which the good Brother has handed round. There is always a jolly little twinkle in the monk's eye, however, as if he knew more than he seemed and thoroughly enjoyed the pretended pleasure of those tasting the Liqueur so strong and pungent !

The evening meal, simple as it is, has a certain dignity about it. A Monk says Grace and then sitting down, does his utmost to entertain his motley company, but as many nationalities are there and even a Monk of the Saint Bernard cannot speak all tongues, his courtesy has to show itself in drinking in turn the health of the various parties. As the red wine is very thin, there is no danger of over indulgence ! On Friday the dinner is "maigre" when the features are sometimes "nutmeg soup" and macaroni.

Those visiting the Hospice must not keep late hours. They are not bound to conform to the conventual rule, but they are expected to retire early. To go to bed, however, is not always to sleep, for often the traveller, wide awake in the black darkness of his strange surroundings, hears each stroke of the Chapel Bell, and perhaps wishes that he was with the Monks at their Offices.

Mass is said very early. No one is asked to attend but many people like to do so, and devout Churchmen will always remember the occasion. The Mass is said at the High Altar, all the Monks assisting at the Divine Office, using books centuries old and of a tremendous size, the work of devout Brothers in the ages past. Then this Mass over, additional Masses are said at

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the side Altars, as memorials of those who have perished in the storms. The Church is very curious but very cold. When one shivers in the early morning of a summer's day, what must it be in the winter ! Yet it is a stimulating thought to remember that day by day, far up on that wild and barren Pass, is said or sung the Holy Mass, the one Sacred Service instituted by Our LORD, pleaded there as at every Altar in the world, for the Living and the Dead.

Mass over, a simple breakfast follows, and then the farewell. Strange as it may seem, one regrets to go ; he even feels sad at parting from the Hospice and the Monks, for a single night has aroused enduring interest and unbounded admiration. Nor is this always concealed. Many is the time, when respect for the Monks and their noble work, prompts the traveller to ask some one of the good Brothers for his Blessing, and kneeling down reverently on the bare ground, to rise again gladdened by the thought of his saintly benediction, for mercy is a handmaid to holiness !

The traveller goes, the pilgrim says farewell and the quiet of the day settles upon the lonely Hospice, to be succeeded again by the bustle of the evening as new visitors arrive. Yet this is only for the summer and this is soon past, when comes the seemingly interminable season of winter, when the days are short and the nights are long, and festal times are over. Then the storms and the snows send the brave Monks with dogs and lanterns to search for those who get lost in that Alpine wilderness, where

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the cold soon chills the body of the poor traveller and the snow quickly spreads his winding-sheet.

A little Morgue near the Hospice shows how often the search is vain at the time or comes too late, for in this gruesome House of the Dead, rest the bodies, just as they were found, clad in their own clothes, in the chance hope that some day, being missed, the unfortunate victim may have his relatives come to recognize and claim their own. "Dust to dust, earth to earth" is the record of that Mountain Morgue, as the bodies slowly crumble away and the bones one by one drop from the rotting clothes.

Sometimes, in a warm corner of a comfortable Library, Study or Drawing Room, when the weather is bad outside, picture a winter storm on the Grand Saint Bernard, with its Hospice half buried in the drifted snow! There is a light in the windows, as watch is being kept there, while outside, breasting the howling wind are heavily shrouded figures led by an almost indistinguishable object in front, which pauses, hurries on, stops again, looks back inquiringly and then frantically digs as the figures come quickly up. They are the Monks of the Saint Bernard and their dog. An unconscious, half-frozen body is tenderly but rapidly dragged out of the snow and with all possible speed is taken to the Hospice—some one's loved one saved from death by those good Brothers!

Or perhaps, those noble dogs all alone have been sent out on the search, having previously been trained how to look for travellers. See them find the poor

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unfortunate, lick the cold, numbed body back to warmth and life, until he is able to unfasten the little barrel at the neck of the dog and drink the contents which give new strength to follow his rescuers to the refuge in the Hospice, a little House of God, where love and sacrifice make the Monks seek the bodies as well as the souls of God's children !

We hear much of the courage and perseverance of Hannibal and Cæsar in leading their armies over the Alps ! We see pictures of Napoleon and his soldiers as they toiled up the Pass, dragging along their frozen guns, and perhaps falling into a fatal sleep about their dying camp fires at night ! And we rightly admire such bravery and thrill with admiration at the tale. Yet those armies which crossed the Alps failed to equal the heroic self-sacrifice of those soldiers of the Cross, the Monks of the Grand Saint Bernard, who remain for years at their post, unknown and unsung by the wide, wide world, simply to save and shelter the humble travellers who come to grief in their winter journey across the Pass, in search of work. Well may all say with them : " God bless the good Monks of the Great Saint Bernard ! "

This pass, as we have said, was not the only one on which a Hospice was built. The Simplon Pass, the Grimsel Pass and the Pass of the Little Saint Bernard were once specially noted for their shelters for travellers, founded and run in a similar way and with the same object in view as the Great Saint Bernard. Of these the Simplon was probably the

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most famous, it having originally belonged to the Knights Hospitaller of Saint John of Jerusalem, but the dangers of this Pass prevented it being used by any large number of travellers. About the middle of the 17th century the old Hospice was sold and became a kind of hôtel.

When Napoleon built his famous road across the Simplon he had barracks erected for his soldiers, which structures later on came to be used as a new Hospice, conducted by the monks of the Great Saint Bernard.

The Grimsel Hospice is on the magnificent Pass of the same name leading from the Rhône Glacier to the Bernese Oberland. The road is very wild and barren but the views are particularly fine. The Hospice is near the top of the Pass by the side of a lonely little lake, the surrounding scenery being desolate in the extreme.

The Hospice of the Little Saint Bernard was also an ancient one and for a long time was served by the monks of the Great Saint Bernard. In the 18th century it became the property of a military-religious order, which we believe still uses the buildings for the accommodation of travellers who pay for what they get.

Conditions and circumstances have now so much changed that it is hardly realized what a journey over a wild mountain pass meant in the Middle Ages, how the dangers were dreaded, how the loneliness was feared and with what grateful veneration these Hospices were regarded.

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These Passes naturally suggest the other routes across the Alps, less fortunate in that few of them had shelters or Hospices for travellers, cared for by godly and charitable monks. One could not enumerate in a limited space the many ways which men found leading across the Alps, some easy, some difficult but all more or less dreaded. Some of these saw the barbarian inroads in early times, some of them were the scenes of fierce fighting in modern days, some of them have become noted for great deeds of heroism. They are all interesting from their associations and most of them are impressive in their scenery.

Few of the great Passes were unknown to the Romans, but as in the early ages these routes were called by other names, it is very difficult sometimes to speak of them in an exact historical way. Certain of them came to be spoken of as "Pilgrim Passes" from the fact that people in mediæval times had to cross them in journeying to Palestine or Rome.

The Brenner Pass is interesting as being the scene of many conflicts between the Tyroleans and their oppressors in their fight for liberty. The Saint Gothard Pass reminds us of the battle fought near the Devil's Bridge between the soldiers of Napoleon and the coalition armies. The San Bernardino Pass is associated with the great missionary of that name, who came up from Italy to preach the Christian Faith. The Splugen Pass is famed for its many events of history and also for the great gorge or

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narrow defile, once so dangerous that it was called the "Via Mala."

Their name however is legend. History is written in large letters over most of these Passes for those who read. Yet after all, the great attraction will ever be the solemn sublimity of the scenery of most of them and the curiosity which one naturally feels in seeing their devious windings up and among the mountains, by torrent, ravine and glacier, leading from one country to another, while the characteristics change with the progress north or south, east or west, as frontiers and boundary lines are crossed.

To return, however, to the Monastery or Hospice of the Great Saint Bernard, it is hard to forget the impressions made by a visit there. What a bleak, bare and desolate spot it is ! How lonely and isolated is the situation ! How the gloomy grandeur of the scene must grow more and more oppressive and overpowering through living there, and especially in the winter when the pass and its environs form a cold, cheerless waste rendered all the worse by the unchanging monotony of the life.

Cut off from their fellows, dead to all that the world holds dear, surrounded by the silent snows, the Monks of the Great Saint Bernard are more than men of ordinary mould ! Even the Holy Offices of their religion have to be said in a chapel often unheated even in the midst of winter (and such a winter as they have there !) because of the present poverty of the Order.

When one thinks of the cold, the privation, the

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gloom and the loneliness up on that mountain pass, so bravely and uncomplainingly accepted and endured and even sought by those Monks, how it reproves the ease, the comfort and the luxury which so many persons seek to-day as being necessities but which are really sapping the morality and vitality of modern life ! For those bleak summits surrounding the Hospice of the Saint Bernard, as well as the good Brothers who minister there, seem to teach us that strength and virtue are not born and developed by softness but rather by hardness and the living of one's life for the good of others.



THE BENEDICTION OF THE MOUNTAIN

[To face p. 97.]

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOUTHERN SLOPES OF THE ALPS

THE beauty of the Mountains is not confined to Switzerland. Some of the loveliest scenery imaginable is found south of the Alps, where to see Mont Blanc from Courmayeur, or Monte Rosa from Macugnaga and Alagna is to enter an entirely different environment.

Courmayeur, although at a higher altitude than Chamonix, being a little over 4,000 feet, is so situated that from it the mountains seem far more lofty, especially Mont Blanc which here becomes "Monte Bianco." While it would be rash to say that this monarch of the Alps is more beautiful viewed from this side it is certainly more impressive. For instead of green and wooded slopes the most tremendous precipices form its base, surmounted by a line of most stupendous snow summits, only completely seen however, from the Little Saint Bernard.

At Courmayeur it is very easy to get close to the snows and the cliffs. Excellent bridle paths have been made, and along these it is possible to go in tiny little carriages, so that anyone lacking either energy or strength can see much of the majestic surroundings, with little exertion. One of the great points

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is the large Brenva Glacier, but although very fine this cannot compare in the beauty of its ice pinnacles, falls and crevasses to those other glaciers which make Chamonix so famous. The Brenva Glacier is one of the most direct routes up Mont Blanc, but it is very steep and very dangerous and part way up this mountain is an ice arête that has to be crossed, which is said to be more perilous than any place in the Alps.

Courmayeur has distinction among Alpinists as the birthplace of Emile Rey, whose name every climber knows. He here met death on the mountain while with a Mr. Roberts. They had ascended the Aiguille du Géant, and coming down, observed that the weather was becoming threatening. Contrary to custom, they decided to unrope, in order to make better time. All went well for a while. When however they reached the rocks which descended to the lower stretches of snow, they saw several "chimneys" down which they had to go. In descending one of these Rey slipped and slid over rocks covered with a film of ice. He tried to stop himself with his axe but it fell from his hand and Rey went down helpless some six hundred feet. Mr. Roberts could not reach him. Snow began to fall heavily and in despair Mr. Roberts managed to reach the hut on the Col du Géant, but so heavily was it snowing that nothing could be done by way of a rescue party until the next day. News was sent to Courmayeur and when the snow stopped, a large party went up and found the body of Rey, who apparently had been instantly killed by the fall. So climbing counts as its toll

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some of the very best mountaineers, whose skill and experience have been the admiration of all.

Courmayeur is picturesque and quaint. While on the north, the great "massif" of Monte Bianco (Mont Blanc) rises like a huge white wall, with turret and bastion of spotless snows, on the other sides are seen mountains clad in Italian verdure. The place is really composed of a little string of semi-detached villages, with many unique and unconventional characteristics and often with interesting associations with the Dowager Queen of Italy and other members of the Royal Family, who frequently have come here. Some of these remembrances are shown in skilfully done frescoes on the outside walls of Inns.

One may pass weeks at Courmayeur, with many delightful excursions to occupy the time. For departure there are two main routes, one over the Little Saint Bernard, a most beautiful mountain trip, and the other by way of Aosta, Turin and Milan. Aosta is a very ancient place, an important little centre, although not over-attractive to the fastidious since it is chiefly noteworthy to-day for its faded buildings, its dirty streets and its idiots. Strange to say, for reasons not necessary to mention, a great many of these unfortunate persons are found there, if report be true.

The trip out by the Little Saint Bernard is famous, leading as it does, first over the Pass with its splendid survey of Mont Blanc, past the old Hospice, now used as an Inn, where there is a large bronze statue of Saint Bernard de Menthon, and then down on the

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French side through a series of pretty valleys to Bourg-St.-Maurice and out to Chambéry and Aix-les-Bains.

Yet lovely as is Courmayeur and its environs, they are completely outrivalled by the more romantic and picturesque Val Anzasca and Val Sesia, although for comfortable and luxurious accommodations for the traveller Courmayeur is still superior. A very good time to see these Italian valleys is the late summer or the early autumn, when some of those who have been to the Swiss Mountains come to the Italian Lakes for a little rest after their more energetic days of climbing. A short sojourn at Stresa or Baveno on the beautiful Lake Maggiore, with its dream-like Borromean Islands, its matchless sunsets and its paradise of flowers will arouse a new interest in the now distant peaks of Monte Rosa and make one long for another visit near the snows. And the trip is easily made, for if one does not care to walk or climb to Macugnaga or Alagna, he can reach these favoured places by carriage or automobile, over splendid roads.

The approach to Macugnaga is through the Val Anzasca which runs in a northwesterly direction from the Simplon road near Lake Maggiore. For a while the way leads through the sunny Val d'Ossola, turning off at Piedimulera. Then comes the steepest part of the whole journey, so steep, that it is wrong to speak of "driving," for the traveller, to preserve his self-respect, feels bound to let his own legs and not the poor overburdened horses take him up! This part of the road, however, is soon over and

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the Val Anzasca is entered. Many little villages are passed, quaint, primitive and very Italian, but the chief charm is the deep ravine, which is one mass of luxuriant verdure, the trees and bushes, in almost tropical beauty, growing down the sides and completely covering them, to the banks of the brawling stream far below. Then, every little while, some turn of the road reveals Monte Rosa, like a great white mass of dome, pinnacle and wall, shining and sparkling against the bluest of skies.

Luncheon here brings the real difficulty of the drive. It is not that there are no places for *déjeuner*. There are many, but most of them, from their exterior commend themselves more to the artistic than to the gastronomic view! Yet here the traveller has to learn his lesson! He does the Italian Inn an injustice! He does not know the welcome which he will receive or the good things which await him! In many cases, the interior once entered reveals spacious rooms, with tiled or polished floors and furniture which would make an antiquary or collector envious!

The visiting guest is "surveyed," and instantly "placed" by mine host. If it is evident that he and his party are to "the manner born," and are probably somewhat fastidious and particular, there will be a little delay in serving the meal and considerable preparation, but when ready, the visitors will be seated at a table, where rich silverware and rare china will grace the board and give dignity to the *déjeuner*, while the wine, aged in some old

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cellar, will shame many a bottle opened at some well-known hôtel.

The Italian Inn-keeper is really a good judge of character and position. Courtesy is his by nature. So is the desire to have his patrons pleased. He will adapt himself to the pocket-book, he will make things satisfactory in that way. It is only when found fault with or treated roughly that he resents it, but with appreciation of his efforts and above all of the artistic sense he likes to affect, all goes well—at least such is the experience in the Val Anzasca, where, the uninviting exterior of a mountain Inn gives one of the pleasant surprises and treats of travel !

Macugnaga is a beautiful spot. Much that is said of snow peaks, giant rocks, green valleys and luxuriant woods applies to this little village, or more strictly speaking to the six little villages which form the Parish boundary. The elevation is about 4,000 feet, from which amphitheatre the snowclad summits are impressive in the extreme, Monte Rosa fairly seeming to soar upwards. Almost all of the ascents from Macugnaga are very difficult and dangerous, because of falling stones, and ice cornices. Many instances of rare courage have been known, one that of a gentleman, who fell far up on the rocky wall of Monte Rosa and broke his leg. To take the injured climber to the valley meant continuous suffering for him and constant peril for his bearers, but all did their part bravely and both life and leg were saved.

The Passes are many, but mostly steep, severe

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climbs to the openings between the various peaks, the crossing requiring skilful guiding and very great care. A few ways, like the famous Monte Moro Pass are easier and are not attended with danger. If one only wishes a view point however, there is no more delightful short trip than to the spot called the Belvedere, some 2,000 feet above the village. It is a walk, then a scramble or climb, first through green woods and meadows, following a very pretty little brook and up and over a steep cone-shaped mountain, largely formed of the moraine of former glaciers in the ages past. There Monte Rosa is seen in all its grandeur. Surrounded by a dozen snow peaks rising from stupendous walls of cliff, it is like a monarch with his admiring court. If one looks upwards the scene is grand and majestic; if one glances downwards the view is soft and beautiful, a lovely combination of mountain and valley all rich in Italian colouring.

Macugnaga as a village is clean, pretty and interesting. Many of the houses are well carved. There is a tree which is a great landmark, for in the days gone by, under it sat the conclave of villagers, which formed a kind of court to decide vexed questions in the valley and to mete out justice.

By far the loveliest trip south of the Alps is that to the Val Sesia. A good way to see this spot, if one has not time to tramp it, is to go by motor, for the automobile road is splendidly made and the views are almost unrivalled.

The start is taken from Stresa, the route following

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the shores of Lake Maggiore for a short while and then after a little *détour* reaching one of the gems of this part of Italy, Lake Orta, with its pilgrimage island of San Giulio and its Sacro Monte. This "holy mountain," has twenty 16th-century chapels, each chapel containing strange, painted, lifesize figures representing various scenes in the life of Saint Francis d'Assisi, in whose honour the shrines are built.

After circling the Lake, a wild and romantic woodland Pass is climbed, from which is seen the lovely, fertile Val Sesia, into which the road leads. It is not long before the motor reaches Varallo, the capital of the valley, beautifully situated and quite a resort in the early autumn. Here there is another "holy mountain," to which many pilgrims come, but nature-lovers will probably be more taken with the lovely view over the valley and the exquisite glimpse of Monte Rosa. The road from Varallo to Alagna, while steadily ascending, is one so well made, with such easy curves and hills that the Italian chauffeur, who generally likes fast running, makes good time. Village after village is passed. Everything is colour: the wonderful blue of the sky, the many shades of the trees and meadows, the varied costumes of the peasants. Barefooted girls and women amaze one with their grace and beauty; men and boys are fit models for the artist; the very clothes worn are attractive and picturesque and there is an air of distinction about these dwellers of the Val Sesia which is most remarkable.

Every ravine and every mountain is a mass of

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trees and bushes. Crossing the rivers or reaching the heights are wire-rope bridges, along which thread-like arrangement men and girls are drawn far up in the air from one side to the other but apparently without a sense of danger. Alagna is the end of the road. The "massif" of Monte Rosa blocks the way, only bridle paths and walks going further in and up. Here are the hôtels, romantically situated. It is a charming spot, abounding in excursions, having admirable view points and splendid climbs.

Quiet and restfulness and peace reign here. Few rushing tourists or trippers come and go, few seekers after gayety and excitement. The everlasting hills are the main attraction. Above are the mountains, around are the mountains and their spirit seems to cast a spell over the scene, giving that indefinable charm which makes the Val Sesia long linger in the mind, when the visit has become a thing of the past, a mere waymark in the journey of life.

There is much talk of building railways into some of these lovely valleys south of the Alps. Years ago such a proposition would have met with all manner of objection and criticism and pronounced "sacrilege" and "vandalism"! Now the sentiment has so changed that few persons would be found to disapprove. The reason is very simple. It is that the Swiss and Italian railway engineers and builders, who are the best in the world, rarely allow their work for long to disfigure a landscape, but carry it out in such a way that although the railway may bring people, it does not bring damage to the scenery.

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As a rule no huge cuts are made, no ugly structures reared, but with the most marvellous skill and ingenuity the road winds up the slopes of mountains, burrows deep into the rock, and overcomes different grades by wonderful curves, loops and tunnels, while at every point the work is so artistically carried out that there is nothing unsightly to be seen.

Of course it opens up the regions to larger numbers of people. It is selfish in the extreme to object to pleasures and privileges being extended to others. The mountain stretches and fastnesses are too many and vast ever to be crowded. As on the Gorner-Grat so on other heights. It is easy to escape and get away from the crowds. And if the parts about Macugnaga and Alagna are "profaned" by the coming of the railway, they may be sure of rich compensation in the consequent improvement which follows that modern mode of transit. For instance, although railways now pierce the Saint Gothard and the Simplon, the old carriage roads are still there and the Passes instead of being spoiled are really even more interesting on account of the wonderful engineering. The difficulty in building these roads was well-nigh insurmountable, but finally all impediments were overcome. It almost passes belief, the accuracy of the calculation as shown in the almost exact meeting of the northern and southern bores of the Simplon tunnel, although starting at a vastly different altitude and grade.

To carry a railway to Macugnaga would be comparatively easy after the first high level was reached.

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It would give new life to the place, perhaps spoiling it for some, perhaps improving it for others, but spoiling or improving as the case might be, it seems only a matter of time before the proposition will be a reality. Then we fancy that these quiet valleys will still retain their beautiful characteristics and even the quaintness, picturesqueness and sense of repose which now make them and their people such a pleasant memory.

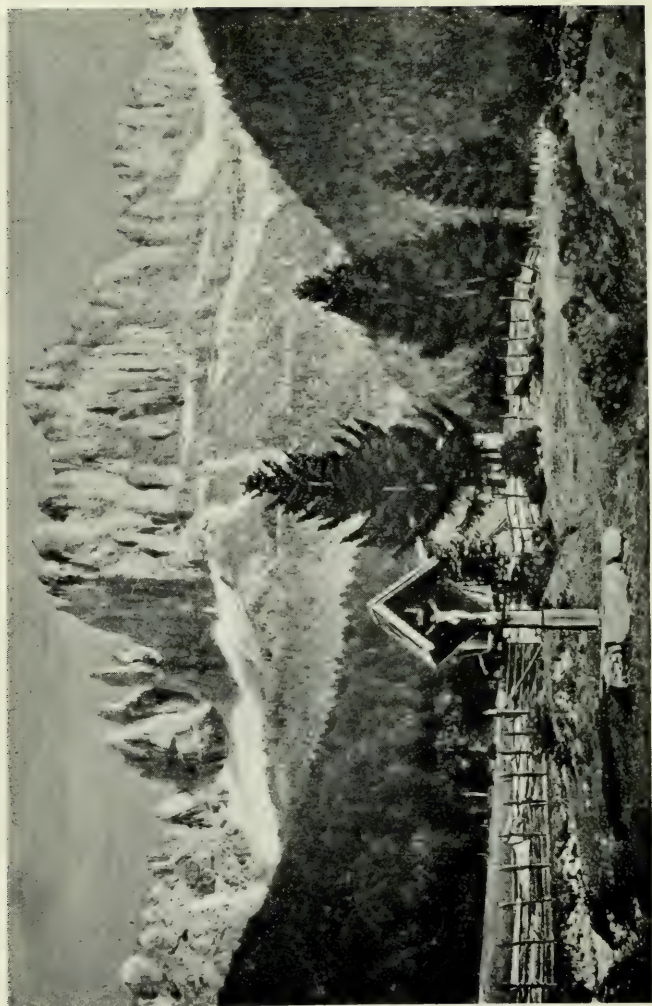
The secret of their charm is that it is Italy, for whether or not one likes or admires the Latin races, Italy will always be a land appealing to the artistic temperament. The Italians reflect the moods of the mountains. Sunshine and storm follow each other more rapidly in their lives and they are happy or sad in a marked way.

The Swiss and Italians differ even in such things as singing and dancing, both of which are popular pursuits among the peasants. The songs of the Swiss are largely simple melodies or folk songs with the addition of their wonderful "Yodel," while the Italian music is mostly reminiscent of the Opera, the popular airs of which are well known to the people. And while the dancing of the peasants of both races consists mainly of reels and jigs, that of the Italians is rendered pretty and picturesque by the gay costumes worn, bright in colour and graceful of cut. Both races show a vim and an abandon in their dancing, but those south of the Alps seem ever to remember and to strive for the artistic effect, for the Italian wherever he is found,

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on mountain slope or in city slum is an artist, with an eye for beauty and an ear for melody, the true product of a land where nature is lovely to view and makes her children ever remember her charms.

This must be taken into account in one's impressions of the regions south of the great ranges of the Alps. It is almost impossible to think of the mountains disassociated from the people. The latter, as it were, become part of the place and in all pictures or memories they add character and colour to every scene.



THE ROSENGARTEN RANGE

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CHAPTER IX

DRIVING THROUGH THE DOLOMITES

ONE generally associates the Dolomites with driving. It is not that people do not climb there, for they do, and mountaineering in that region is often very exciting and interesting, and dangerous enough to suit the most reckless !

Yet the majority of persons who cross these passes and see these fantastic peaks do so in carriage or motor. And a very pleasant experience it is and one that appeals particularly to those who love the poetic and the picturesque.

The Dolomites are part of the Southern Tyrol. One portion is Italian, one portion is Austrian, and the rivalry of the two nations is keen. Under a warm summer sun, the quaint little villages seem half asleep, and the inhabitants appear to drift dreamily through life.

Yet this is more apparent than real for in many respects, the people here are busy in their own way.

Crossing this region are many mountain ranges of limestone structure, which by water, weather and other causes have been worn away into the most fantastic fissures and clefts and the most picturesque peaks and pinnacles. A very great charm is their curious colouring, often of great beauty.

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The region of the Dolomites is a great contrast to the rest of the Alps. Its characteristics do not make the same appeal to all. This is largely not only a matter of individual taste and temperament but also of one's mental or spiritual constitution, for the picture with its setting depends as much upon what it suggests as upon its constituent parts.

And especially so, when that which the eye sees is so lovely that it stimulates in the highest sense the soul or spirit. Thus the capacity of the beholder counts for much.

The Dolomites suggest Italy in the contour of the country, in the grace of the inhabitants and in the colours which make the scene one of rich magnificence. The great artist Titian was born here and he probably learned much from his observation of his native place.

Many of the mountain ranges are of the usual grey but such is the atmospheric condition that they seem to reflect the rosy rays of the setting sun or the purplish haze that often is found.

The peaks are not great peaks in the sense that we speak of Mont Blanc, the Jungfrau, the Matterhorn or Monte Rosa. They impress one more as pictures with wonderful lights and strange grouping.

The people love their peaks however and probably regard them as superior to any others to be found. There is a story told of one young guide, who later lost his life on Monte Cristallo, who once said: "I do not mind if I get killed if there are only mountains like this to climb in the next world."

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If one's quest is satisfied then one admires that which he sees. If not, the scene seems dull.

The Dolomites suggest these thoughts: those who care only for the snow will be sadly disappointed, those who love the rocks will be proportionately enchanted. Happy those lovers of nature who can delight in any and all of her charms !

If the reader intends some day to visit the Dolomites he is advised to enter from the north. Salzburg and the Salzkammergut, so much frequented by the Emperor Francis Joseph and the Austrian Nobility, make a good introduction. Then by way of Innsbruck, one of the gems of the Tyrol, Toblach is reached, where the driving tour may properly begin.

Toblach is a lovely place, if one stops long enough to see it and enjoy it ! The impatience of many travellers is such that they would start at once for the drive, if it was not for the good Innkeeper of the main hôtel. Like Pharaoh, he "hardens his heart and will not let the people go" ! Yet "mine host" by his most excellent "déjeuners" always afterwards sends one on his way, with the best of memories of the inner man well tended and cared for. So, when one of those comfortable Tyrolean landaus drives up to the door, and the luggage is placed front and back, out of the way, and the travellers are most comfortably seated in the roomy body, the journey through the Dolomites begins in the best of spirits.

It is not very far to Cortina, the centre of this beautiful region. The way there is very lovely. And driving is in keeping with the spirit of the place.

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It almost seems profane to rush through in a motor, as some do, for not only is it impossible to appreciate the scenery, but also it is out of harmony with the peace and quiet which reign.

For a while there is traversed a little valley quite embowered in green, but presently this abruptly leads into a wild gorge, with jagged peaks on every side. Soon Monte Cristallo appears. This is the most striking of all the Dolomite peaks. At a tiny village, called Schluderbach, the road forks, that to the right going directly to Cortina, the other to the left proceeding by way of Lake Misurina. This latter, by far the most picturesque, crosses the frontier and begins to climb steeply, which ascent is generally preceded by the driver politely suggesting to those in the carriage that as many as can should get out and walk! There is a certain humour, irony or paradox (as one may view it) in having to *walk* up all the steep hills when *driving*!

Lake Misurina is a pretty stretch of water, pale green in colour and at an altitude of about 5,800 feet. On its shores are two very attractive and well-kept hôtels, with charming walks, from which one looks on a splendid panorama, picturesque in the extreme.

From Misurina, the road again ascends, becoming very narrow and very steep. The top is called "Passo Tre Croci," the Pass of the Three Crosses. The outlook is very lovely, with the three serrated peaks Monte Cristallo, Monte Piano and Monte Tofana, standing as guardian sentinels over the

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little valley of Ampezzo far below, where lies Cortina sleeping in the sun, while in the distance shine the snow fields of the Marmolata.

Just as steeply as it climbed up one side, the road descends on the other side, to Cortina. This place is the capital of the valley and altogether lovely : beautiful in its woods and meadows, beautiful in its mountain views, beautiful in the town itself and beautiful in its people.

Cortina has much to boast of : an ancient Church and some old houses ; an industrial school in which the villagers are taught the most delicate and artistic (and withal comparatively cheap) filigree mosaic work ; and a community of people, handsome in face and figure and possessing a carriage and refinement superior to any seen elsewhere among the mountaineers or peasantry. In the neighbourhood of Cortina are many excursions and also extended rock climbs, but those who go there in the summer will be more apt to linger lazily amid the cool shade of the trees than to brave the hot Italian sun on the peaks !

After a few days' stay at Cortina, the drive is continued. There are many ways out. You can return by a new route to Toblach and the Upper Tyrol. Or you can go south to Belluno and thence to northern Italy. Or a third way and perhaps the finest tour of all is that over a series of magnificent mountain passes to Botzen. This last crosses the Ampezzo Valley and then begins the ascent of Monte Tofana, which here is beautifully wooded. Steepness seems characteristic of this region ! It is hard to imagine

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a carriage climbing a road any steeper than that one on the slopes of Monte Tofana ! If narrow and steep is the way and hard and toilsome the climb this Monte Tofana route most certainly repays one when it reaches the Falzarego Pass (6,945 feet high) which is certainly an earthly Paradise ! One cannot aptly describe a view like that ! It is all a picture : as if every part was purposely what it is, here rocky, here green, here snowy, with summits, valleys, ravines and villages and even a partly ruined castle to form a whole such as an artist or poet would revel in.

After a pause on the summit of the Pass, again comes a steep descent, as the drive is resumed, which continues to Andraz, where déjeuner is taken. One cannot live on air or scenery and even the most indefatigable sightseer sometimes turns with longing to luncheon ! Then one returns with added zest to the feast of eye and soul. And at Andraz, as one lingers awhile after luncheon on that high mountain terrace, a lovelier scene than that spread before the eye could scarcely be imagined. Indeed it is a "dream-scene," and as seen in the sleepy stillness of the early afternoon, when the shadows are already playing with the lights and gradually overcoming them, it seems like fancy, not reality.

Again the carriage is taken and soon the road is climbing once more, this time giving fine views of the Sella group of peaks and going through a series of picturesque valleys. At Arabba (5,255 feet), a pretty little village, the final ascent to Pordoi begins.

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The scenery undergoes a change. It becomes more wild and barren and the characteristics of the high Alps appear. The hour begins to be late and it becomes cold, but the light still lingers as the carriage reaches the summit of the Pass and stops at the new Hôtel Pordoi (7,020 feet high) facing the weird, fantastic shapes of the Rosengarten and the Langkofel, on the one side and on the other the snowy Marmolata and the summits about Cortina.

The Hôtel Pordoi is a marvel for a mountain hostelry, for it is built and appointed not only to be thoroughly comfortable but also to appeal to the artistic sense. And it succeeds in both aims. One is loath to leave when the time of departure comes, after a restful sleep in that pure and bracing air, far up on the heights in that pretty mountain inn.

The following morning the start is made for Botzen. The way steadily descends for hours, past the pretty hamlets of Canazei, Campitello and Vigo di Fassa, surrounded by an imposing array of Dolomite peaks. After crossing the Karer Pass the scenery becomes much more soft and pastoral. Below the Pass, most beautifully situated is a little green lake called the Karer-See, near which is a large and luxurious summer resort, the Karer-See Hôtel, with a fine view of the peaks called the Latemar and the Rotwand. The Karer-See is distinctly a fashionable place, in some respects similar to the German Spas. As one sees the array of gowns, the throngs which collect in the lounge, the drawing-rooms and the corridors of the big hôtel and the too evident resort to paint and

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powder on the part of many, one may wonder if there is any thought given to the loveliness outside in the beautiful works of nature. The world is open to all. There is no reason why these people have not the right to come to Karer-See if they wish ! Yet it is hard for one who loves the mountains and that happier, healthier life closer to nature to see transplanted here the airs and the affectations of the conventional life of the capitals of Europe, wholly out of accord with the sublimity and the simplicity of the surroundings !

Leaving the Hôtel Karer-See, the road enters a wild ravine or defile known as the Eggen-Thal. In places the sides are so sheer and steep that it must have required very skilful engineering to have carried the driveway through the defile, above and alongside the torrent which rushes through the gap. Occasionally the gorge widens out, showing several picturesque falls. A very impressive sight is the old Castle of Karneid, high upon the cliffs.

At Botzen the drive through the Dolomites ends. At best it gives but a glimpse of this delightful region ! That glimpse leaves a lasting impression, not of snowysummits and glisteningglaciers, but of wonderful rocks and more wonderful colouring and of great peaks of fantastic form, set in a garden spot of green. And Botzen is a fitting terminus. It dates far back to the Middle Ages. It boasts of Churches, Houses and Public Buildings of artistic merit and architectural beauty and over all there lingers an atmosphere of rest and refinement, refreshing to see, where

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there might have been the noisy bustle and hopeless vulgarity of so many places similarly situated. There is plenty going on, nevertheless, for Botzen is quite a little commercial centre in its own way, but with it there is this charm of dignified repose. One wanders through the town under the cool colonnades, strolls into some ancient cloisters, kneels for a moment in some finely carved Church and then goes out again to the open, to see far above the little city that beautiful background of the Dolomite peaks, dominated by the wonderfully impressive and fantastic Rosengarten range, golden red in the western sun. With such a view experience may well lapse into memory, to linger on so long as the mind possesses the power of recalling the past.

It seems hardly fair to write of the Dolomites without a reference to rock climbing as well as to driving, for there are many famous peaks which have been ascended in this region, which is probably the most difficult and dangerous place of all climbing.

To be proficient in "rock work" one must either have a strong natural talent or else a large experience gained by beginning very young. The novice with a good guide and with good weather may acquit himself creditably on a snow slope or glacier, when on the rocks he may be either practically helpless or a real menace to those climbing with him.

It is probably hard to say which are the most difficult: the Dolomite pinnacles or the Aiguilles at Chamonix. Awful accidents have happened in both sections, and probably ever will, but very many

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successful ascents have also been made. When one considers that by the foot missing some narrow ledge, or by the tired hand failing in its muscular grasp, or by the slipping of one's extended body a serious catastrophe may occur, one gets a faint idea of some of the dangers of the rocks.

On one of the famous mountains there is a place in which the climber has to crawl along a narrow ledge, with a sheer precipice on one side many thousands of feet down, and at a certain spot, where the corner is to be turned, he must take the upper part of his body around this turn while the lower part of his body remains on the other side at right angles! There are other mountains where the climber practically ascends a wall of rock or some pointed "needle," depending entirely upon little stones jutting out or shallow holes in the cliff for his sole support and aid! The marvel is not that accidents sometimes happen but that the ascents are so frequently safely made!

In the Dolomites as elsewhere fatalities occur. Many of these, perhaps most of them, could be prevented by taking such common-sense precautions as for instance the following: never persist in making a climb when the weather is unpropitious and the guide deems it unsafe; never attempt what is manifestly beyond one's powers; never neglect the use of the rope and the ice-axe when safety suggests them; and never go alone or without a guide into places difficult or dangerous.

There is no glory in imperilling one's life or the

DRIVING THROUGH THE DOLOMITES

lives of others for the mere sport of climbing, and it is morally wrong to do foolhardy things from a spirit of boastfulness or braggadocio.

Those who speak of the Dolomite peaks as "simple rock trips" are as silly or inexperienced as those who make mention of the Matterhorn, with its constant volley of stones, as "nothing to do," or refer to the treacherous Wetterhorn as the "ladies' mountain," or Mont Blanc as a "mere grind." Such persons, if sincere, have no right to attempt any mountain! For one of the first requisites of this sport is the knowing and the admitting of the dangers and difficulties and the necessity of constant watchfulness and care.

As a matter of fact the Dolomite peaks will probably give the expert, as well as the learner, all of the excitement that the climber may desire.

Here in the Dolomites, however, as in other places of the Alps, the perils are not confined to the great cliffs or the snow summits. Many persons have lost their lives, while engaged in the apparently harmless pleasure of picking flowers, which were found growing along the edge of some mountain path. They either stepped too near the side and fell over, or they failed to see where the ground had opened after a heavy rain, and stepping upon the loosened earth they went over the precipice with the landslip which their weight had caused.

How many persons laugh when cautioned to be careful who for their disregard pay with their lives!

As has been said however, the Dolomites seem

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pre-eminently fitted for driving tours. If "variety is the spice of life" even the most energetic will feel justified, in changing their accustomed way of seeing the Alps and here going by carriage where they would be inclined, ordinarily speaking, to go by foot. Of course this gives up that intense joy and pleasure of looking down from some high summit. One will not be able to get as far away from the world, or realize as De Quincey once wrote that "no secrecy is so complete and so undisturbed by sound or gaze from below as that of a mountain top," but nevertheless in the Dolomites the substitution of driving is sufficiently compensating.

Then, when new and different regions are entered upon, the restful tour of the Dolomites will have added zest and zeal to the more energetic times and experiences now to follow, when one again becomes a "valley-pounder" and "man of ascents."



NEAR THE GRAND SAINT BERNARD

CHAPTER X

OVER THE STELVIO

THE pleasures of the mountains are not only for the active and athletic or confined to walking and climbing. While this is the ideal way in which to see the Alps and the only manner by which one can get into close touch with nature, nevertheless it is possible to enjoy the air and the views without this exertion. This is particularly true of the Passes, and probably far more people cross by carriage than go by foot. In some places the law permits the use of automobile but this should be discouraged, as it makes the descent dangerous and also renders it impossible properly to see and appreciate the scenery.

One of the finest trips is the crossing of the Stelvio Pass, from the Tyrol into the Engadine, where really wonderfully beautiful scenery is found, in a comparatively small area. And besides the natural beauty to be seen there, is the added interest of the historical associations and traditions of several very different peoples, who for all their nearness to one another, are far from alike.

The Tyrol is most attractive. The mountains are not so high as those of Switzerland, nor is there as much snow to be seen. Yet there is an exquisite

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loveliness about the wooded glens, the mountain girdled valleys and the running waters. To these natural charms are added the quaintness of the villages and the picturesqueness of the people, for the Tyrol being less travelled by tourists has preserved to a greater extent than Switzerland its primitive manners and characteristics.

The Tyroleans are religious. Mostly Roman Catholics, they are very devout and are staunch supporters of the Church. One characteristic of their religion is their love of wayside crosses and shrines. There may be counted over fifty during the day's drive from Meran to Trafoi. Unfortunately most of these crosses and shrines are most uninspiring, some even revolting in conception and others inartistic in execution, unworthy of the solemn subject set forth, the Passion of Our LORD.

There is probably nothing more capable of arousing faith, love and devotion than the Crucifix, that sacred symbol of our salvation, but the crude representations to be seen in the Tyrol are often nothing else than hideous caricatures, a very strange fact when one considers the proximity to Munich and Oberammergau, the centre of religious wood-carving.

The approaches to Meran are from Innsbruck on the north and from Botzen on the south. Innsbruck is a delightful little town, possessing some old houses and interesting churches. It has a palace built by Queen Maria Theresa and also boasts a museum, a picture gallery, a monastery and a castle. It is well fitted to be the capitol of the Tyrol.

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Botzen on the south is prettily situated in a lovely glen, encircled by mountains. It is not far from Trent, where the famous Church Council was held, and is quite near to Meran, a very famous Tyrolean health resort, possessing fine hôtels, filled in the autumn with the aristocracy and royalty.

Meran is a very beautiful place. The gardens and walks along the river bank are charming and afford the most picturesque views, here an old castle perched upon a hill, there a wooded defile in among the mountains and quite near by a monastery or convent, where the bell is sounding to some holy office. At Meran crowds congregate in the autumn for "the grape cure" and "the whey cure," and bring with them the fashions and the follies of the gay world.

Meran is the starting-point for driving over the Stelvio. The coachman or driver is generally a typical Tyrolean, one might almost say in "costume," as he wears his green hat with the customary feather, cocked on the side of his head.

Briskly the carriage drives through the town, and out through the series of narrow green valleys, prettily wooded, and surrounded with mountain heights.

Little villages are sleeping in the sun, peasants are working lazily in the fields, the bright colours of their clothes showing well against the early grain, and here and there a group of children will stop in their play to bid the traveller God-speed.

Towards afternoon the road begins to ascend steeply towards Trafoi. One can look back and

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down upon the vineyards and wheatfields of the valleys about Meran.

Then the road winds in among the mountains, with glimpses of the snow peaks and presently enters a very narrow valley, more like a pass, which ends at Trafoi, some 5,000 feet up, splendidly situated at the foot of a great group of snowclad summits called the Ortler. There is a picturesque village with a fine hôtel at Trafoi, but the mountains seem so to overhang the place that one has a feeling of oppression, the sense of "being shut in."

From Trafoi, the road ascends steeply and in long windings to Franzenshöhe and from there to the top of the Stelvio (9,055 feet high). This is the boundary between Italy, Switzerland and Tyrol. The view is very fine, especially prominent being the white peaks of the Ortler, directly above, and the shining summits of the Bernina range in the Engadine.

The first night of the drive is generally passed at Trafoi, the second at Santa Maria, in the Münstertal. From there on the following day one can easily drive to Pontresina.

The Engadine is different from other parts of Switzerland, in people, language and in manners, for the peasants are of Romanic origin, speaking a dialect known as "Ladin." The villages are large, with huge houses built almost always of stone. They are picturesque rather than pretty. The women have quite attractive colouring and are Italian in their carriage and appearance.

The drive through the Engadine is very lovely,

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but on account of the elevation is generally hot on a clear day. Green is the predominant colour, green heights, green meadows, green woods, of varying shades. The impression is that of verdure not grandeur, but even in the verdure there is a black tinge which is a distinguishing feature of the Engadine, although less marked in the spring and early summer, when flowers grow everywhere in great profusion.

As you approach Samaden the Bernina range is seen, but while Samaden has the finer view, Pontresina will prove a more attractive place to climbers. It is astonishing the number of people who visit this part of the Engadine, there being both a winter and a summer season. The winters are long, lasting for seven months and are very severe, but as there is steady cold with quite a lot of sunshine, this region is much affected then by consumptive persons, who by the life in the air, have the chance of cure, if there is cure for them.

In the summer, the season is short, but while it lasts, for all the great number of hôtels at Pontresina, St. Moritz and Samaden, they are generally crowded. One attraction of this section, not possessed to the same extent by other climbing centres, is the driving. The Stelvio and Bernina Passes are easily accessible; Italy may be reached by way of Belluno or Maloja, and there are many beautiful trips such as those through the Engadine valleys or along the little string of lakes to Maloja. We advise all people who reach the Engadine from the Tyrol to leave it by way of

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Maloja and the lovely Val Bregaglia to the Italian Lakes.

The Bernina range has its devoted admirers. There are some who rival it to the mountains above Chamonix or Zermatt, but it seems a far reach from Piz Bernina and its attendant group of peaks, lovely as they may be, to Mont Blanc or Monte Rosa with all their grandeur of snow field and glacier. More than this, mountains are like jewels: they need "setting" to show them off. In this respect, even the admirers of the Bernina peaks must admit that they fail to impress and charm as do the mountains of Savoy, the Valais or the Oberland.

There is considerable climbing done at Pontresina, but there is more making of excursions. A stroll along the lovely forest path to St. Moritz, or by the little mountain stream near Pontresina or a trip to the Roseg Glacier are among the easy walks.

The last-mentioned trip is charming and possible to the least energetic, as one may drive to the foot of the glacier, and after having luncheon then climb the adjoining Alp Ota, some 7,385 feet high. The view from this point is as picturesque a one as is possible to imagine. To the left is the tiny valley of the Roseg, leading to Pontresina; in the pastures near the end of the glacier are sheep grazing; in front far below is the Roseg glacier; above it and to the right are the snow summits and snow fields of Piz Roseg and its companion peaks, while bounding the valley are the great green wooded heights.

The Roseg glacier is very beautiful. It reminds

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one of a bride, for the snows are so white and so filmy, for all their vast depth, and fall in such a way, that fancy easily sees pictured the wedding veil. When one is far from the Engadine, it is the memory of the lovely Roseg glacier that is stronger than any other, and when the Bernina is forgotten and the villages and valleys have faded from before the mind's eye, it is this jewelled ice river which lingers, still seen in its shining, glistening splendour as it falls from Piz Roseg and fills the quiet secluded upper end of the tiny valley: "the wedding veil of the mountain's bride," as it has been called.

The trip along the string of lakes to Maloja is full of pleasure. The proximity of water always adds to the view and these lakes of the Engadine are no exception. Coming over the Stelvio, one generally passes through Samaden which is the chief village of the Engadine. Here are the old families of the region and here are the finest of the huge houses so typical of this section. These buildings are large and lofty, stone structures with deep recessed windows usually heavily barred. One would hardly think that dwellings which house the cattle in the basement would boast of much above, but so it is, for many of these great storied buildings are richly panelled and floored and contain really handsome furniture.

Beyond Samaden come two pretty little places, Celerina and Cresta, near extensive forests, and but a short way beyond is Lake St. Moritz with the village and baths of the same name. How there can be such devotees of St. Moritz is a mystery to the true

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mountain lover, for apparently this place is but one of large hôtels, middle-size hôtels and small hôtels, all very florid looking, all full of fashionable throngs and all seeking the golden harvest that comes from such a crowd.

There used to be a pilgrimage shrine here in mediæval times but one fancies that religion plays a small part in the life there to-day. Perhaps the most attractive feature of St. Moritz is the little forest walk leading to Pontresina, which is rural, romantic and lovely to a degree.

The winter is the season at St. Moritz and it is said to be well worth while to journey so far to see the life there at that time. The lakes are frozen, the banks are deep in snow and the air is magnificent, so consequently everyone lives out of doors, sleighing, tobogganing, skating and above all, ski-ing being the favourite pursuits and amusements.

Continuing the journey south in the Engadine, next come in order the little villages of Campfer, which name records the fact that iron ore was once abundant here, Silvaplana, the terminus of the Julier Pass (long ago known to the Romans and said by some to be named after Julius Cæsar), and the two Sils, one on the left known as Sils Baselgia and the other on the right named Sils Maria, which boasts of the beautiful Belfry and Church. Sils Maria is one of the loveliest places imaginable, in a sunny situation, with just a glimpse of snow where the little Val Fex, which runs south, reveals its glaciers of shining white above the trees.

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The end of the lakes is reached at Maloja. At first it is disappointing as the huge hôtel is an ugly landmark, but one soon forgets or does not see this, as the surrounding scenery is very beautiful. To walk a little further and gaze over a great precipice into the Val Bregaglia, leading down to Italy, is a treat, but even more so is the easy trip from Maloja to the little Lake of Cavloccio. This body of water is enclosed by wooded mountains, and into it run some pretty cascades, while a short distance off are seen the snows of the wild Muretto Pass and the great Forno glacier. The whole picture is very wild and romantic.

Returning to Maloja, if the departure is to be made to Italy, it is generally by carriage down that wonderful road of many windings and steep descents to the Val Bregaglia and on to Chiavenna and Lake Como. If, however, the traveller desires again to return to the Tyrol, he will probably retrace his road as far as Samaden and then drive out by one of the numerous ways leading to the North.

That is not a climbing region, strictly speaking, although many mountain trips may be taken, but it is chiefly noted for places such as the Cathedral town of Coire and the health resorts of Ragatz, Davos and other well-known spots. The whole section is most interesting from its historical associations and most picturesque with its ruined castles of the old nobility.

From Coire, the capitol of the Grisons, a railway leads out to Ilanz, from which one can drive or walk at a high level to Dissentis, Andermatt and Goschenen.

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From here it is easy to go to the more familiar region of summer travel : to the north to Luzerne and Zurich, to the south to the Italian Lakes and to the West over the Furka and Grimsel Passes or to the Rhône Glacier below.

Here we may close our account of a trip over the Stelvio. It seems a far reach from that Pass, but it does not take long to make the journey. And all the time the traveller is learning more and more of the glory of the mountains and the beauty of the everlasting snows.



THE RIFFEL SEE AND THE MATERHORN

[To face p. 131.]

CHAPTER XI

A STORM ON THE HEIGHTS

WHEN seen from a *safe* place, most people love to watch a storm ! It is rather different when one is in the midst of it. To see from the land a ship labouring in a gale is more pleasant than being in it. So an Alpine storm, with its shrieking wind and its hail and snow is more enjoyable in a place of cover !

In the Alps a storm arises very quickly and generally is soon over. Sometimes its fury is terrific. Many a man has been killed by lightning on the summit of a mountain, when those in the valley thought that there were only tiny clouds about the peak. In the lower levels however the danger is less.

It was quite an unexpected storm which once broke upon a party crossing the Gemmi. The morning had dawned bright and clear, so they started full of spirits, some on mules, some on foot. Riding however is not always desirable, for the gait of an Alpine mule is neither comfortable nor graceful !

It is said that mules and asses were introduced to the mountains for the purpose of carrying packs over the Passes. This accounts for the tendency of every mule to walk on the edge of the road, for the packs protruding over the sides of the animal would constantly bump against the rocks unless he gave the

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cliffs a wide berth. Whether the theory be true or not, the Alpine mule seems never so happy as when on the brink of a precipice, apparently enjoying the oft-times unpleasant sensations of those riding. So on this special day, those who were mounted soon came many times to wish that they had decided to tramp it !

The bridle-path to the Gemmi ascends steeply at the very start. The mules take it at a speed that makes the walkers in the party work hard to keep up, abandoning the slow and steady gait of the real climber. Presently a high level is reached, when the path begins to wind steadily upward through a succession of barren valleys very picturesque and containing a number of tiny waterfalls. After more zigzags the road passes for awhile through woods and then comes upon pastures, strewn with the debris of a dreadful landslide which desolated the valley in 1895, causing the death of both men and cattle.

These landslides are becoming more frequent in the Alps and are partly due to the carelessness of the peasants, who cut away the trees for firewood or wood-carving and so leave the thin deposit of porous meadow and soil with little to which to cling. It is a strange fact that the people will often rebuild a village on the very site of one already devastated, knowing that the same threatening conditions still obtain !

From here on to the top of the Gemmi the way is very wild. Black rocks, loose stones and masses of

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bare earth make the view bleak and chaotic in the extreme, only somewhat relieved by the summits of the Altels, Doldenhorn and other snow peaks which are occasionally seen.

Several little lakes and some isolated châteaux are passed, and also a small hôtel, at which parties generally stop for a short rest.

Towards noon, the top of the Gemmi is reached. The pass ends abruptly in a tremendous precipice, at an altitude of 7,640 feet. On the other side hewn in the rock is a kind of path or stairway descending 1,500 feet towards the Baths of Leuk at its foot, from which roads lead to the Rhône Valley.

From the Gemmi, there is a magnificent view of the mountains of the Valais, Monte Rosa, the Dent Blanche and the Zinal Rothhorn being particularly impressive. Those used to seeing the Matterhorn from Zermatt however, would hardly recognize it in the blunt pyramid which is seen from the Gemmi.

It was at the top of the Gemmi that trouble came upon this party. The day so beautiful at the beginning had changed. The wind had arisen and was growing in violence. The clouds began to gather and to grow blacker and blacker. It required little experience to know that an Alpine storm was approaching. It was decided to hurry back to Kandersteg. The members of the party were ready but not so the guides or muleteers. It had chanced to be a fête-day and the men were observing the fête, in a way that one is glad to say few guides or attendants do—by getting drunk. To go down then was not their pleasure or

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intention. Neither requests nor threats had any power over them. So in desperation, feeling sure that they could hardly miss the way, the visitors started to return alone. The ladies did not mind the lack of the mules. The trip up had dissipated any possible love of being mounted !

It was fairly quick work going down but not quick enough to escape the rain. It came, and it came in a deluge, the wind sweeping it along so as to drench one in a moment. When the "halfway house" (the primitive little Inn called by the long title of "Hôtel Schwarenbach") was reached, a stop was made for rest and incidentally for tea. Still the rain descended in a downpour and the outlook seemed growing worse. Presently shouts were heard and shortly after appeared, unabashed and unrepentant, the maudlin muleteers, utterly unable to stand straight, yet angry at having been left at the summit. Naturally their aid was refused, but as the ladies were then wet and tired by the rain it was necessary to get some substitutes. This was no easy matter. The drunken guides made a great noise. They threatened to seize the mules. Finally the matter practically adjusted itself, for two of the muleteers collapsed and fell asleep, the third became sufficiently sober, and taking him and one new man who was found, a start was made, with the two men guiding or leading the three mules.

The Pass was now full of clouds. In a moment they hid everything. One member of the party could scarcely see the others. Suddenly there came a

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blinding flash of lightning, apparently at one's very side, followed almost immediately by a dreadful crash of thunder. The full fury of the storm then broke. It was at once terrifying and dangerous. For weird, fiery zigzags of lightning forked around, above and below the party. It seemed a marvel that no one was struck. And blinded one moment by light, another moment by cloud, with the rolling, reverberating crashes of thunder sounding in the very ears, one might well be excused at not fancying the experience !

To make matters worse there came a shower of hail, no little pellets as might fall in a city, but great stones as large as walnuts, hitting rocks, trees and persons and dancing off to the ground. Drenched, blinded, and now cannonaded by hail, a shelter was sought, all dashing along the rough path, with the frightened mules galloping in the midst. Fortunately, a little *châlet* was seen at the winding of the road. They rushed for it, and in a moment were safe and sound within its friendly shelter. Then, the storm, but a few minutes before viewed with nervous fears, now was watched in keenest interest. Yet strictly speaking, a *châlet* is no very secure place ! The hail played a tattoo, the wind blew in great gusts, with a kind of moaning sound, the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed—a perfect fury of elements. Trees went down with a crash before the storm, stones were sent by the waters dashing to the ravine below, and as one looked one could but marvel at the power latent in nature. The blue sky and the shining sun were as

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a memory. The merciless, relentless storm was the reality. And it made one think. For it demonstrated a law of nature : she may give solemn warnings but she never utters messages of mercy. The Wayside Cross marks the handiwork, too often, of nature exacting punishment and death for some offence against her inexorable decrees !

As the storm came, so it passed. The time seemed far longer than it really was. In the track of the tempest came the quiet zephyr, blowing away the clouds, and long before Kandersteg was reached, the sky was blue again and the sun was shining. Wet, bedraggled, weary the party reached the hôtel, but safe and sound. And no one of those who had been through that Alpine storm would have missed that exhibition of what rain and hail, thunder and lightning can be in the High Alps.

The experience however, was in no way unique. No one can climb or tramp for long without having to face the elements. Those indeed are fortunate who are near shelter or who are on some beaten track. The Gemmi when swept by a storm is as nothing to being caught in a snow on Mont Blanc or in sleet on the Matterhorn. It is almost incredible how thickly and quickly the snow will fall, forming huge drifts and being blown by the wind like sharp needles into the faces of travellers.

Sleet is even worse than snow and on a peak like the Matterhorn it soon covers the rocks with thin coats of ice, rendering progress perilous in the extreme. Lightning, too, when it comes, is most

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dangerous and in climbing it may be attracted by the steel ice-axes carried in the hand, it being no unusual thing for one to be stunned and shocked at such a time in a severe summer storm.

In many records of ascents the wind storm alone is also mentioned as a very great menace, the fury of the blast sometimes being sufficiently strong that safety only lies in remaining stretched out flat on the rock or ice, holding on with hands and feet and taking the additional precaution of catching the rope around anything that holds.

The Alpine storm with its oftentimes drenching downpours is also dangerous in the way of causing landslips. Frequently either masses of earth and stones on the edge of a path, or snow cornices, or an ice slope will fall down after a rain, carrying with them any unfortunate person who may be within the danger line.

In the olden days the Alpine storm was the horror and dread of the peasants. This fear and awe have been portrayed in music, which often forms a number played on the organ, so frequently heard of an afternoon in the Swiss Cathedrals. Many people listen with rapt attention to this music, who have never been in a real Alpine storm and while of course there must be an appeal to the imagination, nevertheless it serves to reproduce, even if in a fanciful manner, the windswept summits, the crash of thunder, the rush and fury of the driving storm and even the voice crying for help.

Such music is impressive and instructive, but of

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course cannot equal the experience of being out on the mountains at such a time and personally battling with the elements.

Many of the disturbances are heralded by moments of great calm and stillness. The first clap of thunder means a change, all the more startling because it has followed a silence almost oppressive.

These of course are the most violent storms, but nevertheless at all times the walker in the Alps must be prepared for them, and perhaps there could be no better caution given than this "Look out for the weather."



THE FIESCHERHÖRN FROM GRINDELWALD

CHAPTER XII

THE BERNESE OBERLAND

IT is hard to find a prettier spot than Interlaken. Situated between two lovely lakes, surrounded by wooded heights, and lying but a few miles from the snowy Jungfrau, it is like a jewel richly set. From Lucerne over the Brunig, from Meiringen over the Grimsel come the travellers, passing on their way the Lake of Brienz, with the waterfall of the Giessbach, on its southern side. From Berne over Lake Thun, from the Rhône Valley over the Gemmi or through the Simmenthal come the tourists, seeing as they come the white peaks of the Oberland. And Interlaken welcomes them all, and rests them for their closer relations with the High Alps by trips to the region of the Lauterbrunnen, Grindelwald and Mürren, and the great mountain plateaux looking down upon them.

Interlaken is not a climbing centre. Consequently mountaineering is little in evidence, conversation about ascents is seldom heard, and ice-axes, ropes and nailed boots are seen more often in shop windows than in the streets.

Interlaken is not like some other Swiss towns. Berne, Geneva, Zurich and Lucerne are places possessing notable Churches, Museums and monuments of the past, having a social life of their own and being

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distinguished in some special way, as centres of culture and education. Interlaken, however, has little life apart from that made by the throngs of visitors who gather here in the summer. There is little to see except a group of old monastic buildings, and in Unterseen and elsewhere some fine old carved Châlets, but none of these receives much attention.

The attraction, on what one may call the natural side, centres in the softly beautiful panorama of woods and meadows, green hills and snow peaks which opens to the eye, and on the social side in the busy little promenade and park of the Höheweg, bordered with hôtels, shops and gardens. Here is ever a changing picture in the height of the season, in fact, quite kaleidoscopic as railways and steamboats at each end of Interlaken send their passengers to mingle in the passing crowd. All "sorts and conditions of men" are here and representatives of antagonistic nations meet in friendly intercourse. On the hôtel terraces and in the little Cafés and Tea Rooms, one hears a babel of voices, every nation of Europe seeming to speak in its own native tongue. Life goes easily. There is a gayety in the little town that is infectious. It is a sort of busy idleness. "To trip or not to trip" is the question. If the affirmative, then a rush to the mountain trains and comfortable cabs. If the negative, then a turning to the shops, where pretty things worthy of Paris or London are seen side by side with Swiss Carvings and Swiss Embroidery and many little superficial souvenirs. As the contents of the shops are exhibited in the

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windows; so the character of the visitors is shown by the crowds, and the life of the place is seen in the constant ebb and flow of the people on the Höheweg.

Interlaken is undoubtedly a tourist centre, for few trips to Switzerland overlook or omit this delightful spot. Thousands come here, who never go any nearer the High Alps. They are quite content to sit on the benches of the Höheweg, listening to the music and enjoying the view. There is a Casino, most artistically planned, with plashing fountains, shady paths and wonderful flower-beds. Here many persons pass the day and, contrary to what one might expect, it is quiet and restful, lounging in that parklike garden.

For notwithstanding "the madding crowd," Interlaken is a little gem of a mountain town, with an undertone of repose and nobility, as if the spirit of the Alps asserted herself, reigning, as one might say, for all not ruling. And always smiling at the people, as it were, is the majestic Jungfrau, ever seeming close at hand, although eight miles away.

In the autumn, when most of the crowds have gone, Interlaken is the scene of a most interesting event, the Cattle Fair, which brings many of the peasants down from the mountains and makes the place melodious with the music of the cowbells. Many of the cows are decorated with ribbons and flowers, especially the prize winners, and these meek-faced animals are for the time quite the "monarchs of all they survey."

The cattle are arranged in a long row facing one

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side of the Höheweg, making a strange sight, hundreds as they are in number, and causing considerable noise with their lowing.

Here come the possible purchasers, and a lively talk soon takes place between the would-be buyers or sellers.

During the Fair, many of those who have come to it, walk about the town, dressed in their best, thoroughly enjoying themselves and seeing their old friends.

The pleasures of this little Swiss resort are exhaustless. The wooded hills of the Rugen give innumerable walks amid beautiful forests, with all their wealth of pine and larch and hardwood, their moss-clad rocks and waving ferns. In that pleasant shade hours may be passed close to Nature. The lakes not only offer delightful water trips but also charming excursions along the wooded shores, sometimes high above the lakes, giving varying views of great beauty. While, ever as with beckoning fingers, the great peaks, snowcapped or rock-summitted call one across the verdant meadows into the higher valleys of Kienthal, Lauterbrunnen, Grindelwald and Kandersteg, to the terraced heights above or up amid the great wild passes.

Interlaken is above all a garden of green. Perhaps the unusual amount of rain which falls to the lot of this valley accounts for its verdure. In any event, park, woods, meadow, garden, even the mountain sides are green, a vari-coloured green, and interspersed with an abundance of flowers. Nowhere is the eye

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offended by anything inartistic or unpicturesque, but on the contrary, the charm is so comprehensive that the visitor looks from place to place, from this bit to that bit and ever sees new beauty.

To complete all, to accentuate in the minds of some this impression of green, is the majestic Jungfrau. Other views may be grander and more magnificent, but no view of the Jungfrau can compare in loveliness to that from Interlaken. A great white glistening mass, far up above green meadows, green forests and green mountains rises this peak, a shining summit of white. Fitly named the Virgin, the Jungfrau gives her benediction to Interlaken, serenely smiling at the valley and at the town lying so quietly at her feet—the Jungfrau crowned with snow, Interlaken dressed in green ! In the golden glory of the sun, in the silver shimmer of the moon the Jungfrau beckons, the Jungfrau calls ! “Come,” she seems to say, “Come nearer ! Come up to the heights ! Come close to the running waters ! Come.” And that invitation falls on no unwilling ears, but in to the Grindelwald and to the Lauterbrunnen and up to Mürren go those who love the majestic Jungfrau !

Even then the quest is unsatisfied. As in the poem, the cry is “Excelsior,” here possible of being put into action, not only by competent climbers who ascend the great white summit which calls them there, but even by ordinary tourists, who now in the wonderful Jungfrau railway can be carried up to the Jungfraujoch.

What a wonderful trip this is ! It may shatter

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some ideals in being taken to such a height in a railway train, but even against one's convictions as to the proper way of seeing a mountain, when all has been said, the fact remains that this trip is wonderful beyond words. There is a strangeness in taking a train which leaves a garden of green in the early morning and in a few hours later, after valley and pass and tunnel, puts one out on snow fields over 11,000 feet above the sea, where are seen vast stretches of white, almost level with the summit of the Jungfrau close at hand, and below stretching for miles, on the one side the great Aletsch Glacier and on the other side the green valleys enclosed by the everlasting hills !

The route is by way of Lauterbrunnen, Wengen and the Scheidegg and after skirting the Eiger Glacier going by tunnel into the very bowels of the mountain. At Eigerwand, Rotstock, and Eismeer are stations, great galleries blasted out of the rock, with corridors leading to openings from which one has marvellous views. Eismeer looks directly upon the huge sea of snow and ice, with immense masses of dazzling white so close as to make one reel with awe and astonishment. In fact this view is really oppressive in its wild magnificence, so near and so grand is it.

The Jungfrauoch is in this respect different. One is out in the open, so to speak; one walks over that vast plateau of snow over 11,000 feet high in the glorious sunlight, above most of the nearer peaks and looking down at a beautiful panorama. On

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one side of this plateau is the Jungfrau, on the other the Mönch, either of which can be climbed from here in about three hours.

Yet the eye lingers longer in the direction of the Aletsch Glacier than anywhere else, this frozen river running for miles and turning to the right at the little green basin of water full of pieces of floating ice, called the Marjelen Lake, or See, at the foot of the Eggishorn, which is unique and lovely. Long ago it was formed in this corner of the glacier and its blue waters are really melted snow over which float icebergs shining in the sun. In such a position the lake underlaps the glacier for quite a distance, forming a low vaulted cavern in the ice. Every now and then one of these little bergs overbalances itself and turns over, the upper side then being a deep blue and the lower side, which was formerly above, being a pure white.

Again turning towards the green valleys, one with the eye of an artist, who can perceive and differentiate varying shades of colour, cannot but admit that the Bernese Oberland is "par excellence" first. Even south of the Alps the verdure does not excel or even equal that to be seen here. There is something incomparably lovely about the Oberland valleys. It is indescribable, indefinable, for when one has exhausted the most extravagant terms of description, he feels that he has failed to picture the scene as he desired. Yet if one word should be chosen to convey the impression which the Oberland makes, the word would be "colour." For whether one regards the snow summits as setting off the valleys, or the green

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meadows as setting off the peaks, it matters not, for the secret of their beauty lies in the richness and variety of the exquisite colouring wherein many wonderful shades of green predominate.

The places for sightseeing in the Oberland are innumerable. Some of them have already been mentioned. Two representative places are Lauterbrunnen and Grindelwald, being respectively the valleys and villages of the same name to the right and left of the "massif" of the Jungfrau range. Lauterbrunnen is far prettier as a place than Grindelwald but is less of a climbing centre. The latter is much patronized on account of its nearness to the Wetterhorn and the glaciers about it.

From Grindelwald itself, little is seen but the sunny slopes of the valley and the great cliffs of the Eiger, the Shreckhorn and the Wetterhorn, but on passing through the village there opens up a very fine view of the gigantic snow wall of the Fiescherhörn. This, in the opinion of many, is by far the most beautiful mountain about Grindelwald.

There are many fine trips here, some quite hard, such as the ascent of the Wetterhorn, some quite easy, as the walks or climbs to the glaciers. An enormous iron-rope or cable now extends from the valley to a place called Engi and along this runs a little lift or car carrying the passengers high up on the rocky side of the Wetterhorn. From that level, the mountain may be climbed or trips taken to several of the icefalls and gorges.

Two very fine points of view in the Oberland, near

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Interlaken are the Schynige Platte and Mürren. From both places can be seen almost the entire range of the Bernese Alps. Mürren is a delightful place for a stay and has for many years been deservedly popular.

From Mürren can be taken an exceedingly interesting climb up to the Schilthorn. This opens a wonderful panorama, with the mountains of the Oberland close at hand. There is an especially fine view of the snowy Blümlisalp and far away can be seen Mont Blanc. From this point and also from many other places in the neighbourhood of Mürren, where walks and climbs abound and the paths are most picturesque and romantic, one may see the Jungfrau in all her splendour, engirdled by the valleys below and at the same time have a far-spreading view of the great white wall of snow peaks which rises on either side. And what a picture it is ! There may not be the wild romantic charm of the mountains of the Valais, nor the solemn appealing splendour of Mont Blanc, but there is a beauty and a loveliness about the Jungfrau which is all her own and which conveys an indescribable impression of rest and peace. The shining expanse of spotless snow seems to sleep in the sunlight and to the imaginative smiles a benediction upon the beholder. From summit to summit, from the blue of the skies to the green of the valleys, and back again to the virgin snows the eye roams, until almost every detail is, as it were, photographed upon the brain so that one, when far away, can still see the Jungfrau, the Queen of the Alps !

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In the solitude GOD's voice is heard, GOD's Presence is felt. "Be still and know that I am GOD" are words which find their proof in that wondrous scene, where in that Alpine height is borne in the truth that such surroundings could only have come into being through the Will and Word of a Divine Creator, One Omnipotent and Omniscient, Whose perfect Knowledge and Wisdom are revealed in the design executed by His decree. If there ever was a sincere infidel and not a self-deceiver he must have been lacking even the primary appreciation of beauty and its meaning, if he could look on such a scene as this and still maintain his doubt of GOD!

A mountain reverie—let us see somewhat of that which silence and solitude suggest, facing the eternal snows of the Jungfrau!

No one can fully appreciate the beauty and grandeur of the mountains without having suggested to him this thought of GOD. As Gesner, a climber and naturalist once wrote, describing an ascent which he had made: "my mind was carried away to the contemplation of the great Architect of the Universe."

For the mountains are not mere objects of admiration. They are symbols of GOD. Their characteristics show forth GOD's attributes. The visible world is the witness of the Invisible GOD. The mountain summit but soars aloft towards the skies to direct man's thought towards Heaven, from which GOD smiles in blessing upon the creations of His Hand. The mountains have a message, and that message is the message of GOD. For there are three great

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proofs of God's Being: the existence of the soul, the voice of conscience and the works of nature. If it be true "I think, therefore I am," it is equally true "I think of God, therefore God is," and if to look at the mountains makes one think upon God, surely it must be because in God's Divine Plan all things are to speak of Him, Who made them.

It may seem a far reach from the pagan belief in Pantheism to the Christian conception of Divine Immanence, but in a way there is the same fundamental thought in the two, that is, of God: in the former case the unillumined mind of man seeing and worshipping the works of Nature as God, in the latter instance, man through the Divine Revelation acknowledging God in Nature, recognizing His Immanence, His Omnipresence.

The Psalmist says "the eye is not satisfied with seeing." Is it not because the mountains are not mere material things but also spiritual symbols? If viewed only in the former way, there should be perfect pleasure in the sight of the Swiss scenery, for nothing earthly could excel if equal the wonderful combination of form and colour to be seen in the Alps, where mountain and meadow, spotless snow and flowered field, rock, ravine, height and stream, sunshine and shadow make one exquisite whole. Nevertheless it remains true that "the eye is not satisfied with seeing." It is not only because of our own imperfections which hurt both the anticipation and the realization. It is because the material mountains are suggesting spiritual things, and the

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heart and mind and soul of man not finding rest in that which is visible to the eye is passing through this to seek to contemplate that which is invisible—that subtle spirit of the mountains which is really God Himself.

It is this religious sense and feeling which must have prompted that wonderful hymn of praise known as “The Benedicite.” To the “Three Holy Children” the works of Nature were seen as existing for the Glory of God, and so to-day, to those spiritually minded, longing for something higher, the soaring summits, the glistening glaciers, the singing streams and the verdant valleys seem speaking of the Giver of all good things and of His glorious work in creation. Thus the words of that familiar hymn of praise gain new force and meaning from our wanderings in the mountains and our meditation there upon the Creator and Ruler of all things. The architects and designers of many of the Churches in the Alps have been thus impressed, and as a result we often see inscribed upon arch or frieze, selections from the “Benedicite” as—

“O all ye works of the LORD, bless ye the LORD,
Praise Him and magnify Him forever ;
O ye Ice and Snow, bless ye the LORD :
Praise Him and magnify Him forever ;
O ye Mountains and Hills bless ye the LORD :
Praise Him and magnify Him forever.”

Thus the mountains, as it were, represent God's Attributes and Ways : the smiling landscape, the peaceful heights and the shining snows speaking of His Love and Mercy, while the crashing avalanche,

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the rushing wind and the sweeping storm tell of God's Power and Judgements.

It is no new thought, this of Nature witnessing to God. When he, who is now known as Saint Augustine, that master mind whose writings have permanently influenced the Christian Church, was fighting his way from the darkness into the light, he saw in Nature an argument for God and heard the created things as speaking of the Creator. In his book, "The Confessions," he beautifully expresses this thought: "... I asked the earth and it answered me, 'I am not He,' and all that therein is confessed the same. I asked the sea and the depths and the creeping things with life and they answered 'We are not thy God, seek thou above us.' I asked the breezy gales and the airy universe and all the denizens replied '... I am not God.' I asked heaven, sun, moon, stars, 'Neither are we,' say they, 'the God, Whom thou seekest!' And I said unto all things, which stand about the gateways of my flesh: 'Ye have told me of God that ye are not He; tell me something of Him.' And they cried out with a loud voice: 'He made us.'"

So when we see the grandest of all works of Nature, the everlasting hills with their embattled rocks, their snowy mantles, their crevassed glaciers, their lights and shadows, their solitudes and silences, we feel the beauty of all and they seem to say with one voice the same message of the mountains: "God made us."

Thus Nature becomes a handmaid to Religion, and

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arousing but never satisfying our love of the beautiful makes us not to rest in the things that perish, lovely as they are, but passing through them, makes us long for and look forward to the sight of God Himself to be revealed, for well Saint Augustine said, "Thou hast made me for Thyself, O God, and my soul can find no true rest till it find rest in Thee."

The effect of the beauties of Nature and their aid to religious belief we find set forth by the Reverend J. R. Illingsworth in his book on "Divine Immanence," wherein he writes as follows: "All of us love Nature in our several ways; men of science, poets, painters, men of religion, men of affairs are equally affected by its spell—the wonder of its processes, the glory of its aspect, the contrast of its calmness to the coil of human care. And with this feeling for Nature . . . comes an increased susceptibility to those spiritual emotions which the presence of Nature inspires and which lie at the root of what we call Natural Religion. The sense of Natural Religion is strong in the modern mind: and this of itself is an important step towards positive constructive belief."

These words are particularly true of the mountains, which exhibit the work of the Creator in its grandest form, and no theory of origin has yet been suggested which will satisfy the *thinking* man save that of God, the Omniscient, Omnipotent and Beneficent Creator, Who is Eternal Energy and Divine Intelligence, One God in Three Persons.

The Ancient Religions all show the influence of Nature upon them, but with them, in the blind

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groping after God, men in their ignorance stopped short at the Work of His Hands, and worshipped Nature in varying ways and degrees, in concrete or abstract form. The sun, the moon, the stars and abstractions such as light, heat and fire were worshipped, as were also the air and the wind, but in this worship there was generally some association with a mountain as an especially holy place. We see a similar idea in Mythology, wherein the gods and goddesses were deities presiding over this, that or the other work of Nature, and herein too the mountain figures as the home of these mythological divinities.

It is in Judaism, however, that the right conception of the works of Nature is found, and in the rich imagery which is a characteristic of the Old Testament writings is seen the constant reference to Nature and especially to the mountains as revealing God, as those holy men of old wrote under the Divine Inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Throughout the Bible, the hills and mountains are taken to symbolize the things of God, the things that have no end, and the valleys and plains the things of earth, the things that pass away, as for instance : "The mount of God," "the everlasting hills" as contrasted with "the valley of the shadow of death."

The language of course is that of allegory and imagery, but it is impossible for one versed in the figurative literature of the Hebrews not to see the setting forth of the fundamental truths of religion in this mystical manner.

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Then there is the historical connections of the mountains with many of the chief events in Religion. One well versed in the Scriptural Record cannot climb long without having constantly suggested to the mind these occurrences in the development of the Jewish and Christian Faith which took place upon "the everlasting hills." It was Mt. Ararat where rested the ark which saved those left by the Flood; it was Mt. Sinai where the Law was given; it was Mt. Carmel where Elijah confounded the priests of Baal; it was Mt. Moriah on which GOD's Temple was built; it was Mt. Zion which was the type of the Heavenly Jerusalem; it was the Mt. of Beatitudes on which Our LORD gave the sermon on the Mount; it was the Mt. of the Wilderness where CHRIST beat back the Devil and proved Himself invulnerable to the attacks of Satan; it was the Mt. of Transfiguration where JESUS revealed the coming glory of His Risen Body; it was the Mt. of Olives where the Master held the last intimate companionship with the Disciples before His Passion; it was the Mt. of Calvary where Our LORD offered the "one full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction" for the sins of the whole world; it was the Mt. of Bethany from which He Ascended into His Glory in Heaven and seated Himself at the Right Hand of the FATHER.

Perhaps no more inspiring words on this subject could be found than those contained in the writings of the Ancient Fathers. We may quote a few of them. St. Cyril of Jerusalem says: "The wider our contemplation of creation, the grander is our conception

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of GOD;” St. Basil writes, “The more profoundly we penetrate the laws on which the universe is founded and sustained, the more do we behold the Glory of the LORD;” and St. Hilary: “Who can look on Nature and not see GOD?”

If we turn to St. Gregory of Nyssa we find a more special application of this thought to the mountains: “look at the mountains, their bases green with grass which no human hand has sown, while their summits cleave the azure of the sky . . . look at these and suchlike sights and can the eye of reason fail to read in them lessons of eternal truth?”

Men have assuredly seen the Message of the mountains, throughout all ages. It is no mere sentiment. It is no idealism of material things. It is but the spirit of man, made in the Image of GOD hearing GOD speak, not in audible word but in beautiful symbols, as “the everlasting hills” point the way upwards to GOD, for as Saint Gregory the Great figuratively expresses it: “the wonders of the visible creation are the footprints of the Creator. Himself we cannot see but we are on the road that leads to vision when we admire Him in the things that He has made. And so we call created things His footprints since they are made by Him to guide us to Himself.”

This thought of GOD is also suggested by the solitude and silence amid the mountains, particularly among the religiously inclined, not necessarily as an habitual thing but as an occasional practice. Our LORD Himself is recorded in the Sacred Scriptures as having frequently sought the seclusion of the mountain.

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So Elijah in his depression following his triumph over the priests of Baal fled to the mountain, and there was strengthened and heard God's voice, not in the earthquake, nor in the whirlwind, nor in the storm, but in the silence succeeding, in "the still small voice."

It has been so from time immemorial. The earliest Christian hermits dwelt in caves in the rocks of the great hills, where in the stillness they had communion with God; the great monastic institutions were built among the mountain solitudes that, away from the haunts of men, the spiritual life could be brought into more intimate relation with God; and priests, poets and philosophers have sung the praises of solitude among the everlasting hills as eminently conducive to prayer and meditation. For there one finds freedom from distracting objects and persons, and a lessening of worldly cares and ambitions, while songs of praise, poetic musings, philosophic reflections, and religious sentiments come easily to a mind, stimulated by such a scene of grandeur.



LAKE GENEVA AND THE DENT DU MIDI

CHAPTER XIII

IN AND OUT THE VALLEY OF THE RHÔNE

TO attempt to describe the lake region would be beyond the limits of these sketches as well as somewhat foreign to the main thought : the mountains. Geneva, Lucerne, Thun and many other places are both beautiful and well known, specially adapted for a rest before and after climbing trips.

From Lucerne over its lovely lake and in and about its shores are many beautiful excursions, such as the famed Rigi and Pilatus, or the valley of Engelberg or the little village of Altorf. Lake Thun is even more fortunate, for not only is the Lake itself very pretty but radiating from it are innumerable trips most attractive and interesting. And so with the beautiful Italian Lakes and those other little bodies of water, which have already been occasionally referred to. It would be impossible to do justice to their many charms in a short sketch. They require a book by themselves.

Yet it hardly seems fitting to pass them by without some slight description of Geneva, which is undoubtedly the finest of all Swiss Lakes. From the city of Geneva with its view of Mont Blanc to the town of Villeneuve with its glimpse of the Dent du Midi, this body of water is one continuous scene of beauty, with shores covered with meadows or vine-

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yards and dotted with villages and villas, above or beyond rising the great mountain groups.

The finest part of the lake is that by Vevey, Clarens, Montreux and Territet, places well known as both summer and winter resorts. Few views can equal the exquisite one here of the Castle of Chillon and the Dent du Midi.

From Lake Geneva runs the Rhône Valley, highly interesting and attractive, with many smaller valleys running south or north from it. The Rhône Valley, which was probably once covered with huge glaciers, if scientists be right, is now for the most part green and fertile, with smiling vineyards, cultivated fields, and pretty villages. The little river Rhône starts at the glacier of the same name and runs through the valley to Lake Geneva, passing on the way many small towns, each one of which is a starting place of some tour or excursion. Especially interesting are St. Maurice with its monastery and relics; Martigny with its Roman ruins; Sion, with its Cathedral, Castles and Churches and its memories of times when its Bishops were the great men of the region; Sierre quaintly picturesque and Brigue noted for its fine residences and buildings. The Rhône Valley in fact is a portion of Switzerland, "*sui generis*," which one gets to love as acquaintance grows until no part of the summer's outing seems quite complete without a glimpse of these familiar scenes and a trip north or south from its many little centres.

Off the Rhône Valley is Champéry, hidden away to the south in a little retreat by itself. The road in is lovely, the surroundings there are charming and

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the village itself is as pretty a picture as one could wish to see. Looking down upon it is the Dent du Midi, bold, bare, and with the white "teeth" standing out against the sky line, partly covered with snow and forming a great ridge which is often climbed for the superb view which is there obtained.

Farther up the Rhône Valley opens another delightful trip, that to Evolena through the Val d'Herens. The road at first is very steep, but on reaching the top of the gorge it proceeds fairly level along the side of the little river Borgne but high above it. Evolena lies in a broad green basin, surrounded by pines and surmounted by snow peaks and glaciers, the Dent Blanche being the main attraction. Further on the valley divides, one path leading to Arolla, another to Ferpècle. These three places, Evolena, Arolla and Ferpècle are great climbing centres, where the one great theme of conversation is the daily ascent of the many peaks or passes. The Dent Blanche provides the most dangerous of all expeditions, not only because of its natural difficulties but also on account of the wind and lightning storms that so often play havoc on its summit and sides. One party that passed a fearful night on the Dent Blanche tells of a lightning storm that came upon them, making the whole mountain seem as if ablaze with fire, striking the ice-axes and dazing all of the party, one of them even being badly burned about the neck.

Still another charming trip, opening from the Rhône Valley is that to Vissoye and Zinal in the Val d'Anniviers, high above the wild torrent of the Naviganze and with lovely views of the snow moun-

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tains at the head of the valley, chief among them being the Rothorn, the Trifthorn, the Besso and the Gabelhorn, looking very different from what they do at the Riffel Alp. Above the Val d'Anniviers, on a high slope is St. Luc, beautifully situated. The hôtels there are most comfortable even if rather plain, but the village although very picturesque does not impress one as very clean. Perhaps one expects too much, but often the contrast between a place and a view reminds of the words, "Where every prospect pleases and only man is vile."

From St. Luc any fairly strong person can walk or climb up the Bella Tola, a mountain almost 10,000 feet high. It is a hot and dusty trip in the summer but one does not mind that, with the glittering Weisshorn so close to view. The summit is formed by a narrow arête, from which one has a magnificent panorama of the Oberland and of the Valais.

A third trip over or among the mountains south of the Rhône Valley is either by the Tête Noire Pass or that by way of Vernayaz, Salvan, Finhaut and Chatelard to Chamonix. The views on either of these routes compare with the finest in the Alps.

Continuing up the Rhône Valley, after passing Visp and Brig, the road begins to ascend steadily what may be called the upper valley, leading to the Rhône Glacier. On the way, to the left are the paths to the Belalp, the Riederalp and the Eggishorn, all having magnificent views of the great Aletsch Glacier.



THE MER DE GLACE

CHAPTER XIV

BY RUNNING WATERS

TO walk and rest within sound of running waters and to listen to their soft musical murmur is one of the most delightful pleasures of the Alps. Running waters appeal both to the eye and to the ear. Whether falling from the rocks or winding through the meadows they are very lovely as they shine and sparkle in the sun. And the eye and ear are not alone in coming under the charm of running waters. The influence extends to man's physical and spiritual being, so that it is frequently said, and we fancy with much truth, that they have a marked effect upon character and conduct.

In some respects the Bernese Oberland is the most favoured for the whole region simply abounds in springs, brooks and falls. As a consequence there are myriads of wildflowers which grow near their banks and make the meadows as green settings for the streams, so that one seldom sees running waters without their fragrant neighbours, forming masses of varied colour.

The whole of the Bernese Oberland is quaint and picturesque. Berne and Thun take the traveller back to mediæval days, for there are many relics

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of the past in these towns. Yet it is not so much the monuments of antiquity as the running waters of the river Aare which here attract attention, rushing impetuously from the lake past Thun, to circle round Berne in a deep gorge, a hundred feet below the level of the city.

As has been said, in close proximity to running waters are the flowers. In passing, it may be interesting to note that few countries are so favoured in this respect as the regions of the Alps. The varieties of wildflowers are innumerable and they are famed both for their size and colour.

The two " national " flowers, so to speak, of Switzerland, are the Edelweiss and the Alpine Rose. Both grow very high up, some say above the snow line. The Swiss have recently issued a very artistic gold coin, showing on one side in relief, their mountains, a peasant girl and the flowers, Alpine Rose and Edelweiss.

Among the flowers most generally seen are anemones, crocuses, forget-me-nots, gentians and daisies. These flowers do not grow, here a few or there a few. They grow by the acre. They cover large fields. They clamber up steep rocks. They colour with their own lovely hues great tracts. Often a mountain side, showing red or purple in the distance will be found on near approach to be simply covered with flowers, often most beautifully and delicately formed.

Everywhere are running waters, falls, streams and springs, as well as the typical mountain torrents.

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The Giessbach, above Lake Brienz, the Weissenbach at Rosenlauri, the Staubbach and Trümmelbach in the Lauterbrunnen, the Schmadribach opposite the Obersteinberg, are a few of the many falls. The two next to the last are unique, the first, the Staubbach descending in one leap of almost a thousand feet, to reach the ground in a cloud of spray, the other, the Trümmelbach forcing its way through glacier and rock to form a series of foaming cascades. These are but two of the many running waters which are so numerous that they give their name to the valley, "Lauterbrunnen" meaning "nothing but springs." The sound of these is almost always to be heard: here the roar of the rushing torrent, there the song of the tiny brook. The torrent fascinates, awes; the brook delights, soothes. Yet at a distance, if unseen, the sound of both mingle together to make a murmur, a melody, a lullaby, singing to sleep the activities, the ambitions of the outer world, and whispering of peace and rest.

One may not listen to the streams yet they affect the "subconsciousness." They sometimes even make a man's "moods." We see common illustrations in a city fountain, in a country brook, where the playing waters of the first refresh one on a hot day or the singing ripples of the second rests one lying on the bank, yet perhaps in neither instance is the individual conscious of the influence exercised. So amid the mountains, these streams have an effect far reaching, not only touching the present moment, but often stretching forward into the future.

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It may be new to some to learn that there is a moral influence in running waters. They are a tonic to the spiritual nature. Those persons born within the sound, living within that environment, have generally a finer moral sense and a deeper spiritual tone than others, all things being equal. This may be difficult of demonstration, but if it is admitted that the dweller in the mountains is generally a nobler character than the peasant in the plains, may it not be that among the causes of this superiority is the influence of running waters, which are such a marked characteristic of the hills? The Swiss are certainly a fine race of people. The savage races of Africa who live in the mountains are said to be superior to other tribes. And records show that crime is far less frequent in the heights, where the fundamental morals are very strong.

All of this shows the influence of one's environment upon the moral nature. In the mountains, the clearer consciousness of the Divine Presence, the mystery which seems to pervade the scene and the grandeur of the Works of God's hand have an elevating effect upon man, beyond question. The running waters have their part to play, and fresh, clean and pure, as they are, and constantly in motion they seem to give similar characteristics to the people living by them, in the mental vigour and spiritual perceptions, in the high ideals and moral life which they show forth.

Some people liken the sound of running waters to that of the sea. There could not be a greater

BY RUNNING WATERS

difference. The sea is sad, the streams joyful. The message of the ocean is restlessness, and whether one sees its waves softly lapping the sands or its billows thundering against the rocks, whether one sees the surface of the ocean smooth as on a summer's day or its white crested surface raging as in an autumn storm, one is ever conscious of an undertone of sadness, and the unrest of ever-changing mood. The mountains on the contrary symbolize peace, the running waters gladness, and amid such surroundings life seems easier and happier. So strong is this difference that a love for the mountains and streams or a love for the sea is indicative to some extent of character, for generally speaking, unless one has the love for both, the lover of the everlasting hills and running waters will be strong, stable, self-reliant and cheerful, while the lover of the sea will be wavering, easily discouraged and given to depression.

The running waters and the frequent rains make the land green and verdant. Ferns and mosses abound, and, as has already been said, myriads of flowers. The peasants prize their flowers dearly. They may not write poetry about them nor paint pictures of them, but they feel a great fondness towards them, loving them for their form, their colour and their fragrance. Many of the Châlets have their windows decked with flowers, and their gardens growing with many a little plant, covered with blooms. Yet window and garden cannot compare with the sloping pastures and the banks of the streams, where God has planted the wildflowers, which of many shapes

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and hues make the landscape one of great beauty, fascinating to look upon.

Perhaps many of these flowers are never seen by man, as they sometimes grow on inaccessible heights. Yet they are not wasted. Gray's words :

“ Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air ; ”

is poetry but not fact. These little Alpine flowers fulfil the purpose for which they grow, the primary purpose in all creation : the Glory of GOD ! They beautify the earth where they bloom, and reveal their Maker as the Lord of Beauty, for nothing ugly can be traced to GOD, and nothing beautiful exists without His Will and Sanction. If there is one thought more prominent than others in the revelation of GOD it is this : that everything was made for GOD's Glory and exists for His pleasure. All conceptions of beauty which man has are, as it were, the emanations of the Divine Perfections of Him, Whose Glory fills the universe. Truly the Psalmist says : “ The Lord shall rejoice in His works ” and the little Alpine flower is not “ born to blush unseen ” or “ waste its sweetness on the desert air ” but rather grows in all its fragrant beauty to please the Creator of all things.

To be by running waters will often bring one to the proximity of the rocks. At Mürren there is a favourite walk leading over the Brünli, to the Sefinenthal and back by Gimmelwald ; at Zermatt there is a charming excursion up the Zmutt valley, both of which trips show the tourist many streams of running waters,

BY RUNNING WATERS

serving not only to draw attention to their own loveliness but also to point to the rocks over which or among which they flow.

All rocks have a grandeur about them : they may form a sea-wall against which the ocean dashes in vain ; they may be the base of fortresses such as Falaise or Belfort ; they may uphold the ancient strongholds such as Edinburgh and Stirling or venerable Cathedrals such as Cashel and Durham and they are imposing and impressive. Yet the rocks of the mountain ranges, with their cascades and running waters are even more attractive. There is such an indescribable sense of power about them, mingled with the beauty of form and colour so often found.

We have always felt that there are sermons in stones. Perhaps there was a secondary purpose in GOD giving His Laws as found in the Ten Commandments carved on Tables of Stone. It may have been that the stone was to show the Eternity of the Law Giver and the endurance of His Laws. For the rock is taken in Scriptures to signify GOD, Who, when all things changeth, changeth not. So felt Dr. Toplady when, overtaken by a storm, he sought shelter in a cave in the cliffs and had there suggested to him the Hymn : " Rock of Ages," which is still sung by thousands, while his other works are forgotten. When we look at the rock, perhaps under that symbol will come the thought of Him, Who is the Rock on which our Church and Religion are built.

Turning from reverie to reality, from fancy to fact we see the running waters of the Alps in a way

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perpetuated in the glaciers. In part these rivers of ice are the result of vast collections of prehistoric snows welded together by the weight, and in part they are the result of the freezing of springs and streams, this ice seeking the point of least resistance and thus pressing or forcing itself downward in a slowly moving mass. This progress, slow as it is, owing to the irregularity of the ground, the difference in width of the valley and the necessary turning or curving, opens up great cracks called "crevasses," breaks off in places from huge snow fields and makes the wide gap called the "Bergschrund," and forms those beautiful minarets or pinnacles known as "Séracs," but ever passing under and over are the running waters, now only tiny rivulets of melted ice, again rushing streams meeting together to form a mountain torrent.

As these great glaciers are largely caused by running waters and in turn make others, it may not be out of place here to refer to some of the characteristics and also some of the dangers of these frozen rivers of ice.

One of the most impressive points about these glaciers and also one of the most serious menaces to climbers are the "Séracs" just mentioned. The fall of some of these great pinnacles of ice so many feet high is a very dangerous event. They look solid and substantial but so unsteady are they, that in some places strong currents of air will cause their fall, when, broken into many pieces, the huge masses will go crashing down the mountain carrying everything before them.

BY RUNNING WATERS

One climber writes how on one of his expeditions a towering Sérac, without any warning whatsoever, fell over, dashing itself into fragments which rushed as an avalanche down the very slope which the party had just ascended ! One moment earlier and these climbers would all of them have been swept away.

Among the thrilling experiences of the Alps there was one, which came near to being a tragedy, during a tramp that a Mr. Birkbeck and party were taking, they with some famous guides being climbing in the chain of Mont Blanc. These persons were resting for a few moments at the top of a steep snow slope. During their stay there, Mr. Birkbeck walked off alone towards the edge of this ice precipice. Although the others did not know it at the time and not until they found their friend, Mr. Birkbeck immediately disappeared and was carried still alive a long distance down, going with great rapidity. When rescued he was very cold and faint, with most of his clothes stripped off him by his slide down the slope, and with his body covered with blood, large portions of the skin having literally been scraped off. Such a fall of almost 2000 feet was enough to frighten anyone, much less to leave the unfortunate person still alive. Yet Mr. Birkbeck never gave way to fear but firmly believed that God would save him. One can but rejoice that such a brave climber was rescued and soon recovered.

There can be little doubt that the great glaciers of Switzerland are slowly but surely shrinking and becoming smaller except in rare instances. Perhaps

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the time will come when looking down from the Théodule Pass or the Jungfrauoch or La Flégère, people will see green meadows and rare flowers where now lie the Gorner and Aletsch Glaciers and the Mer de Glace, even as we see to-day the like at Interlaken or in the Rhône Valley, which once in the long ages ago, if scientific theories be correct, were completely covered with ice and snow.

It is a strange reflection and brings with it the feeling of how insignificant here is the life of man to the centuries in the world of nature. We walk where generations have walked before, but the mountains which smile upon us and the running waters which sing in our ears have greeted many persons before us, and when we have gone to the "Great Beyond" they will probably welcome others in the same place !



MONTE ROSA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

[To face p. 171.]

CHAPTER XV

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS IN THE ALPS

IN the mountains are wonderful revelations of lights and shadows. The cloud effects are beautiful in the Alps—in fact they are not only beautiful, they are marvellous !

Mr. Whymper says in his book “Scrambles amongst the Alps,” as he records the descent of the Matterhorn by himself and the Taugwalders (after the awful accident, when Lord Francis Douglas, Mr. Hadow, Mr. Hudson and Michel Croz the guide fell four thousand feet to their death), that they were now well down and were gathering up their things for the final descent : “When lo ! a mighty arch appeared, rising above the Lyskamm, high into the sky. Pale, colourless, and noiseless, but perfectly sharp and defined, except where it was lost in the clouds, this unearthly apparition seemed like a vision from another world ; and almost appalled we watched with amazement the gradual developement of two vast crosses, one on either side . . . our movements had no effect. It was a fearful and wonderful sight ; unique in my experience and impressive beyond description coming at such a moment.”

A different phenomenon but equally interesting is recorded by Tyndale when climbing above Cha-

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monix : “ . . . a series of clouds had ranged themselves, stretching lightly along the ridge at some places and at others collecting into ganglia. A string of rosettes was thus formed which were connected together by gauzy filaments. The portion of the heavens behind the ridge was near the domain of the rising sun and when he cleared the horizon, his red light fell upon the clouds and ignited them to ruddy flames. Some of the lighter clouds doubled round the summit of the mountain and swathed its black crags with a vestment of transparent red. The adjacent sky wore a strange and supernatural air; indeed there was something in the whole scene which baffled analysis, and the words of Tennyson rose to my lips as I gazed upon it : ‘ *God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.* ’ ”

Tyndale spoke of *clouds*, but the beauty of the clouds is really the glory of light, and nowhere in the world is the loveliness of light seen as in the mountains, where the atmosphere is so clear and rarified.

Only can the sun be seen in its splendour in the heights. It is a lovely sight to see the sun shining upon the smooth waters of the sea or upon the shimmering sands of the shore; it is a lovely sight to observe the sun smiling upon the quiet valleys and rolling plains or even glinting with gold the spires of great cities, but the sun’s beauty there is different from the sun’s beauty in the mountains. For in the heights, not only is the light of the sun stronger but it is also accentuated by contrast, with the shadows

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cast by the rocks, sunshine and shadow being foils as it were, to one another. Towards evening, the sun seems to linger upon the dazzling snows as if loath to say "good-night," but already down below the shadows are creeping over the scene! What a marked contrast! Perhaps the solemn beauty is increased by that very contrast, but in any event one truth is forced home to the thoughtful observer: the loveliness of light. There is a joy in light, there is a sadness in darkness, because light signifies life and the shadows death.

Few persons ever think upon light, to reflect what it does for the world, that it is a primary principle of life, and was the first command of God in the Creation: "Let there be light!"

For light is the word we use to express the illumination of body, mind and soul. And we may note that Our Blessed LORD continually used the figure of light to set forth the Divine and Heavenly Inspiration that His Person, Life and Words would be for all time, as He says: "I am the Light of the world."

Light is one of the main essentials to life. The animal world could not live, the flowers could not grow unless there was light. In the darkness there is neither form nor colour, but in the light both are seen. All beauty whatsoever depends upon the light, in the eye that sees, in the revelation that is presented.

In the mountains the sun is seen in its glory. The higher one goes, the clearer the light, the stronger the heat, as Alpine climbers well know. And in this natural phenomenon is seen a spiritual truth, for if in a

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sense the sun symbolizes GOD, the nearer man gets to GOD, the more he perceives His Glory and the greater he feels His Love.

There is a very beautiful story told of an Agnostic who once spoke to a holy man of GOD and said that if He could only behold the Glory of GOD, he would believe in His existence, adding (perhaps with a touch of irony): "Can you show me GOD?" "I will show you GOD's ambassador," said the Priest. Taking the Agnostic out to a mountain summit, the Priest pointed to the sun and said: "Look at the Glory of the ambassador of GOD!" The man raised his eyes for a moment, but at once turned away, saying: "I cannot look at the sun!" "If you cannot look upon the Glory of the ambassador of GOD," answered the Priest, "how can you presume to behold with physical eyes the Glory of the LORD of all things?"

There is a joy in sunshine! It is as healthful as fresh air. It affects mind as well as body. Put a man in a dark room and the man loses his spirits; put a flower in a dark cellar and the flower fades away. The benefit to mind and body is incalculable, for light is a germ destroyer, a physical purifier, a spiritual stimulant. Like the flowers, man needs the sun.

Among the mountains then, the sun is seen in a way that is ever suggestive. Its light is one of the glories of the heights. One loves to watch its various effects, when it brings the dawn of day, or signals the time of rest at evening, when it shines in dazzling radiance upon the fields of snow, penetrates into those deep crevasses, and chases the shadows from ravine

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and valley. The very scenery seems to change with the changing light.

At dawn and dusk in the mountains the lesson of light is most clearly set forth. Let one arise early in the morning and go out into the cold, crisp air and seek some vantage point, as the skies are beginning to lighten and the moon and the stars to fade away. At first is seen the wide expanse of snow peaks and glaciers, stretching majestically for miles and miles but now cold and lifeless, one great frozen sea, stern and still in the silence of the morning, mysterious and shadowy in the moments before dawn. Then as you look there comes a faint tinge of pink upon that highest peak, then upon another peak and then, as a morning kiss, greeting summit after summit, glacier after glacier until the roseate hue of the rising sun is bathing in rich colour and beauty the once cold stretch of ice and snow; the wonderful "flush of adoration" as Mrs. Le Blond calls it, only to fade away as the sun rising higher in the heavens turns the rose to gold and shines in glorious light upon the world.

Yet even the beauty of the dawn, or the splendour of the day, is excelled by that indescribable, mysterious loveliness of the Alpine Glow.

It comes at evening when the shadows have crept over the scene. In the valleys lying low between the mountains it is already twilight. The softness of nature has gone. Everything seems cold and cheerless in the absence of the sun. The summits are assuming a new look, stern and shadowy and spectral,

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when as a soft caress there seems to creep a deep roseate glow over all their spotless snows. It lingers as if loathe to go, lighting the mountains with an exquisite, ineffable loveliness, "spirituelle," unearthly, and mystical.

Yet as you look it fades, slowly fades until it is as a dream that is past, a vision that has come and gone, a spirit which has kissed "good-night" to the now spectral peaks. And to those who stand looking in the quiet of the evening, there comes an indescribable feeling of happiness and contentment, the fulfilment, as it were, of the words : "the mountains shall bring peace."

So, perhaps, may be the passing of a soul when the sunshine of youth has faded and the shadows of age have come. Then, in the recollection of a life well lived and in the joy and comfort of religion, there will be seen shining in the face the beauty of holiness and the peace past understanding, even like the glory of the Alpine Glow.

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